

## **BUSINESS BEFORE THE ANNUAL MEETING**

1. To accept and approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on May 17, 2009
2. To vote upon the election of any persons proposed as members of the Parish
3. To elect officers and committee members
4. To receive committee reports, financial reports, and the reports of the Co-Ministers and the officers
5. To raise, grant, and appropriate such sums of money as may be necessary
6. To conduct such other business as may come before the membership.

### **New Parish Members**

The following 39 people have signed the membership book since our last Annual Meeting:

Dawn Avery	Jon Hazilla	Christine Nogueira
Elizabeth Berges	Joseph Horning	Sarah Morse
Eliza Blanchard	Claudine Indigo Kavanagh	Arden O'Donnell
Greg Buckland	Jaime Kim	Deirdri Reddington
Bllu Claudine Catalano	Ryan Kim	Sachielle Samedi
Ralph Child	Kathryn Kirshner	Carolyn Christine Schook
Charlie Clements	Amanda LaRose	Gillian Simkiss
Meg Coward	Matthew Laurence	Shelly Mae Simmons
Margaret Thurmond DePrimo	Julia Lavine	Janiece J. Sneegas
Michael Durwin	Anne Marcus	Corey E. Thomas
Niall Foley	Adele Munger Mathieu	Anya Phillips Thomas
Ann Gilmore	Jeffrey Mathieu	Margaret Vidale
Carolyn Hall	Aden Michaud	Jianli Yang

### **Officers and Standing Committee Members**

The Leadership Development Committee nominates the following members:

For Clerk of the Parish	Linda Smith
For Treasurer	James Womack
For Moderator	Janet Sanders
For the Parish Committee	Karla Baehr (continuing for one yr) Chip DeWitt Julie Horvath Meg Coward
For the Finance/Investment Committee	William Dwyer Brad Reich Rich Suter
For the Leadership Development Committee	Anne Harvey Kilburn Two TBD
For the Religious Education Committee	Ann Dinsmoor Julie Palmer One TBD

Other Business

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Smith  
Clerk of the Parish

**First Parish in Brookline  
Minutes of the 292nd Annual Meeting  
May 17, 2009**

**Present:** 64 active members signed in to receive ballots, representing a quorum ( $\geq$  15% of 215 active members)

**Moderator:** Janet Sanders

**The meeting began at 12:45 pm**

**Welcome:** All present were welcomed and reminded that the meeting was to be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the 2008 annual meeting were unanimously approved.

**New Members:** The following 22 people signed the membership book since the 2008 Annual Meeting:

Susan Andrews	George Maryniuk
Margaret Beal	Mary McCarthy
Sarah Bush	Leslie Becknell Marx
Jennifer Ann Dillinger	Sam Pharo
Charles Fuller	Douglas Reynolds
Mark Gianino	Kim Reynolds
Dianne Isaacson	Phyllis Sweet
Harriet Koch	Stephen Sweet
Pam Kristan	Melissa Sullivan
Christine Leonard	Scott Ullrich
Elizabeth Martin	Kelley Violett

**A motion to accept these new members was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Ordination Recommendation:** A motion to ordain Leslie Becknell-Marx as a Unitarian Universalist minister at First Parish Brookline was seconded and unanimously approved.

**Nominations:** The following names were proposed by the Leadership Development Committee as officers and members of standing Committees:

For Clerk of the Parish	Linda Smith
For Moderator	Janet Sanders
For Treasurer	James Womack
For the Parish Committee	Pat Bartels
	Janet Britcher
	Ray Wellbaum
For the Leadership Development Committee	Maureen Giovannini
	Gene Thompson-Grove
	Mike Luke
For the Religious Education Committee	Matt Etemad-Gilbertson
	Nick Peterson
	Leslie Spaneas
	Ann Dinsmoor
For the Finance/Investment Committee	William Dwyer
	Rich Suter
	Brad Reich

**A motion to accept these nominations was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**TBD Report:** The TBD (To Be Discerned) Task Force report was introduced with a short activity lead by Gene Thompson-Grove, familiarizing people with the Generative Questions. The report was then presented by Ann Dinsmoor, on behalf of the TBD Task Force (the report can be found in the Annual Report) and accepted by Karla Baehr, for the Parish Committee. The generative questions will be used in the Parish Committee retreat and in various FPB committees.

**FY 2009 Budget:** The budget was presented and reviewed by Drusilla Pratt-Otto, Treasurer. The budget was established with the goals of supporting growth in our community, prudence in the use of our endowment, and striving to be a fair compensation congregation.

The question was raised as to whether there was money allocated in the budget to fix the grandfather clock. Dru answered that there was not currently money allocated for that purpose, and Bob Williamson, of Buildings and Grounds, said that this was a new issue and not raised during B&G's survey of committee/congregational needs. A motion was made and seconded to amend the budget to add \$500 to fix the grandfather clock. It was put to a voice vote and was voted to NOT amend the budget. Bill Dwyer proposed that the Historic Preservation Committee look into the clock issue. His proposal was accepted.

Charles Sandmel noted that he had questioned the lack of money for youth ministry in the budget last year and that he didn't see any this year. Rev. Jim answered that our new intern, Mary Helen Gunn, is taking youth ministry as a part of her portfolio for the coming year.

**A motion to accept the FY2010 Budget was made, seconded and approved by voice vote, not unanimously.**

**Stained Glass Recommendation:** The Stained Glass Task Force presented a three part proposal for dealing with the stained glass issue. The proposal was to (1) authorize the establishment of a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization for the purpose of conserving some or all of our stained glass windows, (2) identify FPB members to work with and serve on this organization, and make available start-up funds and (3) reserve the endowment for operating expenses and basic capital needs of the building. (The full proposal can be found in the Annual Report.)

There was discussion regarding the reason for a separate, non-church-related 501(c)3, concerns over FPB ownership, timing of the committee becoming operational, the pros and cons of working with the Brookline Community Foundation, and other issues.

**A motion to accept the Stained Glass Recommendation was made, seconded and approved, with one no and one abstention.**

**Social Action Resolution:** Carol Spitzer, for the Social Action Committee, presented the following resolution for approval at Annual Meeting: "We, the congregation of First Parish, request that the Parish Committee, in concert with the Social Action Council, make environmental stewardship one of the priorities for the 2009-2010 church year. We want to increase the spiritual practice of caring for our earth through worship, education, and in the ways we spend church resources. We commit to search for and implement ways to lighten the environmental impact of our church building and its programs, as well as promote positive environmental actions and programs in our church and in our lives."

**A motion to accept the Social Action Resolution was made, seconded and unanimously approved.**

**Other Business:** The opinion was expressed that we need to make First Parish Brookline more welcoming to people of racial and ethnic diversity. As a result, the following resolution was crafted: “that First Parish Brookline begins and follows through a process similar to Welcoming Congregation, focused on making our congregation more welcoming to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.”

**The resolution was made, seconded and unanimously approved.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Smith  
Clerk of the Parish

## **2010 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CO-MINISTERS**

Dear Ones,

On May 15, 2005, we were called to serve First Parish in Brookline, by a nearly unanimous vote of the congregation. We have thrived together because the congregation had faith in a co-ministry and we, Rev. Martha & Rev. Jim, trusted that congregation was deeply committed to living out new dreams, in the face of major challenges.

At the start-up retreat in the Fall of 2005 we were charged to focus on three priorities:

- 1) Promote “right-relationship” on behalf of strengthening the bonds of community;
- 2) Deepen the spirituality of the community;
- 3) Grow the membership in numbers and in diversity.

The five year anniversary of our call offers us the chance to consider how we have lived out those priorities together and to wonder about the priorities for the next five years.

### **Right-Relationship and Community**

Co-ministry was a new practice for both of us and the congregation so the first priority was to support the co-ministry by being clear about lines of communication-avoiding playing off one against the other in way that might divide them or the congregation. For several years we focused on creating a learning community that gave timely and direct communication of praise and blame. The Committee on Ministry adopted a covenant with the ministers to encourage direct communication rather than passing on anonymous concerns. As a result we took time to develop clear agreements about process that guided our communication and decision-making as we moved toward the process to become a Welcoming Congregation, became informed about our challenging financial condition, and addressed the issue of selling or keeping the Hedge House. When we sang *Siyahamba* in harmony as the votes were cast, the ministers and the people witnessed how covenantal agreements had contributed to the capacity of this community to hold diversity and complexity. The rainbow banner, hung in year two, is a testament to our covenant of radical hospitality.

The leadership built on that success in the process of addressing serious building safety issues, creating Worship Dialogue circles when the issues of the symbols in the sanctuary were pressing, launching new ways to focus and coordinate our social justice programs, addressing tensions between staff and committees with the help of the Mass Bay District, the creation of the Stained Glass Taskforce as a non-profit, and the formation of a Diversity Ministry Team.

Our communal commitment to right-relationship results in church that is experienced as a place to learn, to mature, and to transform by those who are dipping their toes into a faith community for the first time, by those who are risking taking leadership positions, and by those who are taking what they have learned here out into the world of family, work, and justice-making.

At our best, First Parish in Brookline is practicing and passing on the UU core religious practice of making and keeping promises— aspiring to live up to the 1717 covenant:

*We give ourselves one unto another, covenanting to walk together as a church, promising to faithfully watch over one another and to delight for love to abide in our midst.*

## **Spirituality:**

Engaging with the spirit is an intimate act that insists that we bring discipline, joy, vulnerability, and mystery into play. The safe, welcoming, diverse and curious community of First Parish has been the context for a growing intimacy with soul and spirit in solitude, in groups, in pastoral counseling, in public witness.

The culture of reverence, intimacy, disciplined practices of listening and contribution is the culture of Small Group Ministry that has spread to adult programs, committees, and ministry teams. Most meetings begin with chalice lighting, a reading and a check-in. Evening meetings often end with folks saying they gained energy and inspiration from the intentional spiritual practice of authentic meeting.

Adult programs and Affinity Groups are being launched by individuals with talent and passion—Woodworking Ministry, Poetry Group, Compassionate Listening, Common Security Club, Bible Study, Meditation, “Launched and Launching,” “Caring for Elders,” Young Adult OWL, Parent Swing, etc. The congregation has made the transformation to having *programs* rather than minister at the center.

Our work of care and compassion, whether listening to the candles of joy and sorrow with reverence, serving a meal at Rosies , or traveling to marginalized communities of New Orleans, Mexico, El Paso, Transylvania, or Guatemala is offered in the spirit of pilgrimage and transformation, rather than tourism.

Our communal worship has expanded to include earth-based celebrations, a UU Passover Seder, and a Service of Remembrance in December for those who experience grief during the holidays. The Communion Service has grown from 8-10 participants to 15-40.

The passing of beloved members and the celebration of their lives have strengthened the spiritual bonds of community. We have grieved the passing of the beloved Minister of Music, John Andrew Ross; long time Deacons, Morton Vose and Carolyn Weatherbee; loyal mom, Jean Davis; smiling presence, Sue Schaupner, devoted educator of our youth, Michael Shannon; our Care maven, Joan Weiss; and the generous “minister” of welcome, Paula Ann Ross. They continue to offer inspiration and courage for the spiritual journey.

## **Building Membership:**

Despite the economic uncertainty we have continued to grow in numbers and spirit. The practice of radical hospitality, backed by a dedicated membership coordinator, in the context of a culture of high commitment to excellence has resulted in substantial growth of membership and growth of diversity.

- Over the last five years our membership as reported to the UUA is up 50%, from 150 to 240, while active membership has grown 85% from 130 to 240 active members.
- Average Sunday morning worship attendance is up 80%.
- Average RE attendance is slightly above the UU average with 60% of registered children and youth each Sunday, and with a remarkable 95+% attendance for 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **Pledging** is up over 90%.
- In the last twelve months we have welcomed **39 new members**, the highest in any year in recent history.

## **What's next?**

As the congregation looks toward the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary our community has an opportunity and an obligation to discover new dreams as we emerge as a church for these times and beyond.

We, your ministers, are eager to build on the progress of the last five years with a renewed and enlarged sense of mission.

We trust the leadership and our shared ministry to continue to evolve our governance to allow for greater transparency, accountability to mission, and maximum creative freedom.

We continue to be committed to financial sustainability that funds our building and a vibrant mission with current pledges, fundraising, and rental income.

We thank the staff team for their contributions to community, growth, and intimacy and for their forbearance as we learn how to lead and follow in the dance of evolving governance for a Program Church. Sonya Abbott, Lynne Beasley, Danica Buckley, David Collins, Ingrid Johansen, Anne Principe, Frank Peace, and April Trussell-Smith have served the mission of this congregation with dedication.

We'll miss Danica's talented presence and thank her for preparing the way for continuing musical community and we are grateful for Lynne Beasley's volunteer service as interim Jr. Choir Director. We look forward to exploring new ways to involve cherubs, juniors, youth and adults in a music ministry as our new choir director is begins next August.

As we near the end of fiscal year 2010 we are especially grateful for the leadership of the Parish Committee, led by Karla Baehr and Jean DeBenedictis, for their courage and patience as we explore new ways to work together, and for our life partners, Josef and Loretta, who keep us humble and laughing.

With love and gratitude,

Rev. Martha Niebanck & Rev. Jim Sherblom

## REPORT OF THE PARISH COMMITTEE

### Congregational Year 2009-2010

This year the members of the Parish Committee have been:

**Class of 2010**

Karla Baehr, chair  
Jeff Cadow and Rob Guillemain

**Class of 2011**

Jean DeBenedictis, vice chair  
Dan Fritz and Martin Thomson

**Class of 2012**

Pat Bartels, Janet Britcher and Ray Wellbaum

**Treasurer**

Jim Womack

**Clerk**

Linda Smith

Reverends *Martha Niebanck* and *Jim Sherblom* and Controller *Ingrid Johansson* regularly attended the monthly Monday evening Parish Committee meetings, as well.

A day and half retreat in September – skillfully facilitated by *Gene Thompson-Grove* from the Leadership Development Committee - launched the Parish Committee's work for the year. We remained committed to the broad vision that guided the Parish Committee under *Jane Hoey's* two-years as Chair: **strengthen community, deepen intimacy and sustain growth.**

To that end, the Parish Committee endorsed as our co-ministers' goal increasing members' engagement. We received and discussed a mid-year and end-of-year report from the co-ministers on ways to "measure" engagement and track trends over time. Their end-of-year report appears elsewhere in this Annual Report and offers information critical to understanding important aspects of our journey together as a faith community since their arrival.

Three votes of the congregation at Annual Meeting in May 2009 gave direction to the Parish Committee's work this year. We made three other commitments of our own. As we look back, we are excited to see substantial progress:

**1. Ensure a stronger, all-congregation "green focus"**

With strong leadership from the *Social Action Committee*, commitment from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and operational support from Church Administrator *Sonya Abbott* and Sexton *Frank Peace*, First Parish in Brookline made significant progress in adopting "greener" practices. Most visibly, we use real coffee cups, silverware and plates at Sunday Hospitality Hour, dramatically reducing our use of non-renewable resources. Behind the scenes, the Buildings and Grounds Committee has made investments in energy conservation, and Sonya and Frank have changed purchasing and cleaning practices to be consistent with good environmental stewardship. A fall social action focus on environmental issues saw substantial coordination and integration of music, worship, children's religious education, and social service opportunities. Making environmental stewardship a church-wide focus helped give impetus to the birth of the "Food Group", a team sponsored by the Social Action Committee that is helping the congregation look at how our food choices at Hospitality and elsewhere can be brought more in harmony with environmental sustainability.

## **2. Support the successful launch of the Stained Glass Window Legacy Foundation**

Parish Committee member *Jeff Cadow* served as liaison to help launch the Stained Glass Committee. With *Sheila Hussey* as its committed chair, the Committee has established an account with the Brookline Community Foundation that will ensure skillful, cost-effective administration of the funds we raise to support our stained glass windows. *Chris Hussey* is negotiating with the Massachusetts Historical Society to bring closure to its prior support of First Parish renovation work (the Tower) and pave the way for future grant funding. The Committee engaged Virginia Raguin to lead a tour of the sanctuary in April to introduce members and friends from the larger community to the stained glass heritage here at First Parish. In April the Parish Committee authorized the Stained Glass Committee to use the balance of the \$5,000 it set aside for 2009-2010 to continue its outreach and planning work next year.

## **3. Endorse and support a process for making our congregation more welcoming to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.**

The Parish Committee turned to the Committee on Ministry (CoM) in June to give us guidance as we sought to respond to the vote of the congregation at Annual meeting in May 2009 to develop a process for making our congregation more welcoming to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. After careful discernment, the CoM recommended that the Parish Committee establish a Diversity Team to carry forward this critically important work, and identified six members to serve in this role: *Greg Buckland, Michelle David, Charles Fuller, Ann Gilmore, Jody Leader, and Michael Luke*. We have identified a Parish Committee liaison to work with the Diversity Team and CoM to support their efforts, and look forward to the congregational conversations this team will be launching next year.

## **4. Ensure continued progress toward financial sustainability.**

Treasurer *Jim Womack* led the Parish Committee's efforts to deepen our understanding of income and revenue trends and identify ways to reach the goal of "financial sustainability".

We deepened our knowledge of our spending obligations, along with our three income sources: pledges, other income (rentals and fundraising), and amount of money we take from our endowment. When meeting our spending obligations – including adequate maintenance of our building - requires more than a 5% draw on our endowment, we have a gap and are not operating in a financially sustainable way. Until last year – with steady growth in pledges and a robust stock market keeping the value of our endowment high - we were closing in on "sustainability" after a long period of unsustainable draws on our endowment. Today we face a gap once again. We understand that making progress toward financial sustainability means that we have to reduce and ultimately eliminate the current gap between our spending obligations (expenses) and our revenues.

Issues related to our goal of "Pursuing Financial Sustainability" appeared on our agenda ten times this year. For example, we reconsidered FPB's fundraising and rental policies, modified our role in Canvass, and endorsed the co-ministers' actions to balance the personnel budget. We made a mid-year reduction to our capital maintenance and repair budget in response to Canvass pledges from last year that fell short of budget. We authorized Jim Womack to develop and present a report on our long-term financial options. Finally, we recruited *Barbara Simonetti* to lead the successful FPB Jazz and Gospel concert in honor of the late *Paula Ann Ross* and her brother, *John Andrew Ross*, First Parish's long-time

Minister of Music. Thank you, Barbara, for your wonderful leadership: the Concert brought so much joy to so many.

**5. Ensure progress toward decision-making structures and communication processes that match our growing size (aka “policy governance”).**

With guidance from our co-ministers and resources available from Mass Bay District and the UUA, the Parish Committee worked hard this year to sustain the transition toward what the UUA calls “policy governance”. The transition had begun with the appointment of our co-ministers five years ago and has been skillfully led by past Parish Committee chairs *Midge Wilcke* and *Jane Hoey*. The need to change our decision-making and communication processes reflects our growth from a “pastoral church” serving 50 to 150 members to a “program church” serving 150 to 350 members.

“Policy governance” is a way for churches that are becoming mid-size program churches to organize decision-making and communication in ways that balance the desire for clarity and efficiency on the one hand, with the desire for community, intimacy and creativity on the other. When done well, it ensures greater transparency, more individual and collective accountability to one another and to the community’s mission and goals, and maximum opportunity for creativity and connection.

To these ends, we studied what “policy governance” is and used this question to guide agenda planning and decision making: *is this proposed action consistent with what we understand a governing board does when it is enacting “policy governance”?*

- We set a core goal for *Rev Martha* and *Rev Jim* as our co-ministers that expressed the larger First Parish Brookline mission of “growth, intimacy and community”. Their goal this year has been to increase member engagement, and they have worked to develop ways to measure engagement in meaningful ways. We reviewed the co-ministers’ monthly reports within that context, and heard mid-year and end-of-year reports on the progress they and the staff they supervise – RE Director *Anne Principe*, Music Director *Danica Buckley*, Membership Coordinator *April Trussell-Smith*, Controller *Ingrid Johansson*, and Church Administrator *Sonya Abbott* - have made in achieving greater member engagement.
- As chiefs of staff, the co-ministers assumed full responsibility for managing the personnel budget and developing a responsible financial plan for the 2010-2011 personnel budget which the Parish Committee has endorsed. Through Church Administrator *Sonya Abbott*, they have also assumed full responsibility for managing our basic operations budget. Their monthly reports kept the Parish Committee informed of significant developments in both arenas.
- The Parish Chair worked with *Gene Thompson-Grove* and other members of the Leadership Development Committee to focus quarterly Program Council meetings on ways that committees can learn about the transition to “policy governance” and be supported to work within that evolving framework for decision-making and communication.
- With help from *Paul McLean*, we endorsed and disseminated a communications policy for First Parish designed to bring greater transparency to our communication practices.
- Members *Dan Fritz* and *Martin Thomson* worked with *Will Spears*, *Maureen Giovannini* and other members of the Leadership Development Committee to

develop a more transparent method of selecting Parish Committee members and chairs in future years.

- We engaged in a dialogue circle with **Gail Schoenbrunn** and other members of the Committee on Ministry (CoM) to learn more about each others' respective responsibilities as we transition toward policy governance.
- We established a more transparent process for naming delegates to the UUA's General Assembly and supporting dialogue between the delegates and members of the Congregation. **Jane Hoey, Steve Sweet, Phyllis Sweet, and Michele David** will be FPB's delegates this year.
- Finally, to support more effective planning, the Parish Committee has decided to change the timing of its annual planning retreat from September to June in order that our co-ministers, church administrator, and committees can build from Parish Committee goals as they use the summer months to plan the church year ahead.

A twin focus for next year's work on "policy governance" will be a) strengthening two-way channels of communication between the Parish Committee and congregation, and b) developing and communicating a clearer understanding of what "policy governance" means for FPB committees.

**6. Support the effective, widespread use of Dialogue Circles and TBD's "generative questions" to deepen communication and community.**

Committee chairs were (re)introduced to TBD's "generative questions" and "dialogue circles" through the quarterly Program Council meetings facilitated by members of the Leadership Development Council, and the Parish Committee and Committee on Ministry made use of a Dialogue Circle in March to deepen their understanding of each committee's role in relationship to each other.

It has been a busy and exciting year for the Parish Committee. As chair, I want to acknowledge the commitment and contribution of each member of the Parish Committee – **Pat Bartels, Janet Britcher, Jeff Cadow, Jean DeBenedictis, Dan Fritz, Rob Guillemin Martin Thomson, and Ray Wellbaum** - clerk **Linda Smith**, Treasurer **Jim Womack** and controller **Ingrid Johansson**. They shared the load and work in right relationship on our journey toward policy governance, financial sustainability and a spiritual community that sustains and supports every one of us. Special thanks go to **Jean** who served as vice chair and co-planned Parish Committee agendas with me, and to **Rev Martha** and **Rev Jim** whose deep devotion to First Parish and extraordinary gifts are evident every day. We are blessed.

On behalf of the Parish Committee,

Karla Baehr, chair

## ADULT PROGRAMS – 2009-2010 ANNUAL REPORT

**Chair:** Julie Horvath

**Members:** Almas Dossa, Ron Wilkinson, Madeline Fine

**GOOD TIMES Chairs:** Lynne Beasley, Liz Scully

**Members:** Maureen Giovannini, Dianne Isaacson

**Mission statement:** To facilitate spiritual exploration and strengthen community bonds by offering a broad range of opportunities to share our thoughts, stories, and beliefs in safe settings.

### **Brief History and Accomplishments:**

Adult Programs has evolved considerably since committee members and friends began a concerted effort about five years ago to plan and offer activities to the congregation. At that point we had a “Build It and They Will Come” philosophy for launching activities resulting in a very unpredictable rate of participation, with the exception of routine events already in place, such as Daybreak Yoga and our book club.

Dramatic improvement in the program status began with active involvement of ministers and interns, lending more credibility to the spiritual possibilities of coming together to learn, deepen relationships, and simply enjoy one another’s company. The Reverends’ contributions and support have been invaluable for sparking continued interest and participation -- courses they’ve introduced are repeated by popular demand!

At this point Adult Programs comprises a constantly evolving portfolio of activities. Interest in particular programs waxes and wanes, reflecting changes in our congregation as time passes. Good Times leaders, for example, will take a well-deserved sabbatical! New programs such as the Poetry Circle have materialized as if by spontaneous generation, with leaders excited to share their passions, interests, and concerns. Most activities were enthusiastically supported; those with the challenges of third-party attendance requirements and fees, such as the cancelled Buddhist Art Lecture and Green Spirituality Workshop, however, taught us a few lessons in planning!

During the 2009-2010 year our offering included the following classes and activities made possible by the efforts of too many FP congregants to name:

### **Adult Fellowship**

#### *Good Times:*

Special Cook and Dine Evenings  
Circle Suppers  
Thanksgiving Feast  
Christmas Feast  
Grand Finale Picnic

*Adventurous ethnic dining out*  
*A tasty Portuguese dinner served at FP*  
*Theater and Concerts*  
*Museum of Fine Arts visits*  
*Board and Sports Games nights*

### **Affinity Groups**

Young Adult Group  
Launching Teens  
Caring for Elder Parents  
Parents of Young Children

Woodworking  
Men’s Group  
Poetry Circle  
Book Group

## Religious Exploration

Small Group Ministry

Daybreak Yoga

Buddhist Meditation

UU Bible Study

Listening Circles (Non-violent

Communication)

Listening Seminar

Five Wishes Workshop

Spiritual Autobiography

Building Your Own Theology

Spiritual Time Management

Young Adult OWL (for Mass Bay

District)

Spiritual Parenting

### **The Future:**

With people now looking forward to participating in, suggesting, and even offering a variety of activities, it's time to face the challenge of transitioning to a format more compatible with the organizational structure and larger congregation. New leadership, along with ministerial guidance, will ensure a broader, deeper catalog of programs more tightly integrated with the goals and missions of the First Parish community.

**The Adult Programs Committee would like to thank** everyone who helped to make programs possible and who participated in them, as well! Special appreciation goes to Sonya Abbott, Frank Peace, our energetic ministers, Dianne Isaacson, Audrey Coulter, Pam Kristan, Janet Britcher, Martha Curtis, Dan Jones, Bill White, Julie Palmer, Jennifer Dillinger, our SGM and affinity group leaders, and everyone who lent a hand, a casserole, a bit of humor, or a pat on the back along the way!

## **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

Report to First Parish in Brookline Annual Meeting May 2010

In the last year Buildings and Grounds has continued to support the church with planning and capital projects. However, it is the day-to-day operation of the church facility by our church administrator Sonya Abbott ably supported by custodian Frank Peace that really makes the church building a special place to be

Buildings and Grounds is very happy to report that the energy and ideas of new members and old friends inspired B&G this year. We continue to coordinate closely with church administration to see that the building systems, furniture fixtures and equipment are sustainable and easy to maintain, and that the interior and exterior finishes and condition reflect well and truly who we are. Our developing relationships with other church committees, especially Social Action, bring welcome perspective and focus to our work.

### **The year in review**

Over the summer of 2009:

The Whitman window left and right lancets were expertly removed and placed in safe storage. Thanks to the stained glass committee for their work, and to Frank Hutchins who has steadfastly championed the caretaking of this remarkable heritage.

The sound system (budgeted in 2008) was replaced. Ray Wellbaum had managed the procurement of the system, and Kevin Ruderman was on-point for the installation. We have enjoyed a clear, expanded and trouble-free sound system for the first time in years.

Based on their participation in the STEM workshops last year, Liz and Hank Reisner identified several energy efficiency improvements which Hank installed over the summer. Hank also made critical repairs to the sliding doors in Pierce, and with help from Gabe Leader-Rose stained the tower exterior doors.

September to May:

In September Elizabeth Martin became co-chair with Bob Williamson who will step down at the end of this year. Liz will continue as co-chair next year sharing the role with another person to be determined this spring.

The FY10 B&G approved budget priorities were several, but in the fall anticipating a church budget shortfall the committee agreed to reduce the budget by half and pursue only exterior roof repairs, and replacing the failed furnace in the sanctuary for the balance of the year

Will Spears led the committee through the decision-making process on the sanctuary furnace replacement. There were two industrial furnaces heating the sanctuary. Under Will's guidance, we disconnected the one failing industrial furnace and authorized its replacement with twin residential furnaces which are more efficient and quieter. Using added thermostat controls, we can now raise the heat in the sanctuary using the remaining industrial furnace and the new furnaces, then run only the quieter furnaces during the services to maintain temperature. This has made a big difference in the quality of the worship experience.

Clint Richmond has continued to manage the ongoing roof repairs, and the repairs to the leaded clear glass windows (not the stained glass) throughout our parish buildings. This annual

commitment over the years is an essential part of B&G minimizing the rate of deterioration to our interior finishes and systems.

Fall and Spring cleanup days focused on the repair, installation and removal of our (over 40) interior storm windows, a critical component of energy savings for the church.

We are particularly appreciative of David Hawkins who has assumed the mantle of championing the organ repairs. David led the organ restoration effort at his previous church, and has experience and insights that will prove invaluable for this work at First Parish.

In addition, many many others have contributed their skills and energy over the year, including Kevin Ruderman, Reuben Pollard, Todd MacFadden, Barbara Simonetti, Ed Page, and Jack Smith. The Social Action committee continues to raise important issues related to building use and sustainability. Anne Dinsmoor and Jon Bartels continue to contribute their extraordinary woodworking skills in elegant in meaningful ways.

### **The coming year**

Budget realities continue to challenge B&G. There is a lengthy list of deferred maintenance projects in the file, some of which are obvious to the congregation, but most of which are not. In the spirit of community, B&G will continue to work with the Parish committee to identify by priority the recommend work for the coming fiscal year. As many of you know, a long term capital plan was produced two years ago which concluded that on average the church could spend \$150,000 per year to keep up with deferred and upcoming capital obligations. The B&G budgets have been typically less than half of that amount, but we keep looking ahead, mindful that we will do the most important work today, and will get to the balance of the work when we can.

The Buildings and Grounds budget proposed at the annual meeting will be based on agreed priorities, to the extent they can be executed under a sound and sustainable fiscal plan.

### **An invitation to join Buildings and Grounds**

There are many current and new opportunities in the Buildings and Grounds Committee to work in friendly teams with experienced support. In addition to adding your energy to the work underway, you could take a leadership role in several open areas. Please consider this an invitation to contact any member of Buildings and Grounds to express your concerns or your interest in contributing to the planning and building projects essential to the maintenance of First Parish

Respectfully submitted by the Building and Grounds Committee,  
Elizabeth Martin and Bob Williamson, Co-Chairs  
April 29, 2010

**BUILDING OPERATIONS**  
**2009-2010**

Building Operations - what is it? Well, according to the budgeted line items it encompasses the recurring daily operating expenses throughout the year from insurance to ground maintenance, fuel oil, snow removal, unplanned repairs, utilities etc and for the second year now the oversight for all of this has fallen on the Parish Administrators shoulders under the umbrella and support of the Buildings and Grounds committee.

Everyone works very hard - in particular Frank Peace - to assist with maintaining First Parish as a welcoming, pleasant, friendly and safe building open to not only its members, but the public at large even though at times it is a never ending battle against uncontrollable odds. Pouring rain caused multiple leaks and considerable flooding, repetitive faulty heating systems and icy parking lots, are but a few of the issues that were dealt with this past year. At times it seemed that every day there was yet another problem, but then again the building is well over 100 years old, has a lot of deferred maintenance and so this all comes as no surprise.

Thankfully many on the Buildings and Grounds committee have lent a hand this past year from Liz Martin, who co-chairs the committee with Bob Williamson, to Clint Richmond who thankfully is always reminding me of some annual checklist item, and Hank Reisner who has become a general handyman exemplar for multiple projects. Then there also is Kevin Ruderman who quietly accomplishes tasks, Will Spears who oversaw the installation of a new furnace under the sanctuary and finally Chris Beasley for even though he isn't on B&G at the moment, I know I can call on him in a pinch for one issue or another. I appreciate their often daily emails, telephone calls or actually meeting face to face on one issue or another. Many others too have joined in to rake leaves, weed gardens, remove storm windows or offered to help when there has been a crisis.

To all of those listed above and to all of those who have pitched in unbeknown to me, or more importantly to those I may have forgotten to mention above, my heartfelt thanks. We are all part of keeping First Parish, as a welcoming building, alive and I certainly could not accomplish any of the tasks without all of you.

Gratefully submitted,  
Sonya Abbott  
Parish Administrator

## CANVASS REPORT

May 1, 2010

This year's canvass was full of community, connection and conversation as we focused on our theme of "Sustainability":

- *Sustaining our community*
- *Sustaining our love for the world*
- *Sustaining our spirits*
- *Sustaining our endowment*

As of April 27th, we have raised \$287,000 (up 3% from this time last year) from 153 households (up 4% from this time last year). We are still \$28,000 from our goal of \$315,000. However, if the remaining 41 households pledge at similar amounts as they have in years past, we have the possibility of reaching our goal of \$315,000.

Our average pledge per household decreased for the second year in a row from \$1,985 in 2008 to \$1,905 last year to \$1,875 this year. Some individuals mentioned they could possibly increase their pledge in the fall and can be re-approached. If we could grow our average pledge per household to \$2,000 it would be possible to reach our annual goal. (Some additional data in the "appendix" at the end of this report.)

This year we implemented several new activities:

- Offering four different ways to participate in the stewardship or canvass process: 1) attending a cottage dinner, 2) responding to a pledge request via mail, 3) meeting with a steward volunteer or 4) visiting the "Canvass Express" table at hospitality.
- Hosting the Canvass Express table for all four Sundays during the campaign month.
- Dividing the list of members/friends into two groups – those who had a long term consistent pledge history (and they were sent a letter and asked to pledge by mail) and those who were newer, had a more inconsistent pledge history and RE families – and they were invited to attend a cottage dinner.
- Personalizing the canvass letter by including pledge history (amt pledged the past few years) and wrote in a suggested 10% increase.
- Trying out some new terms "Annual Financial Commitment (or Contribution) Campaign" or Stewardship instead of "Canvass" and Steward instead of canvasser.

We saw a large increase in the number of people who chose to complete the pledge process by mail or by completing the forms at the Canvass Express table. The Cottage Dinners were less popular this year, perhaps in part because we were giving a special push to individuals who were new to the church, RE families as well as those with an inconsistent pledge history. Five dinners were held. There was a willingness to offer a breakfast with play group for busy parents, but there was not enough interest to actually do it.

Considerations for next year:

- 1) Evaluate the target audience and process for cottage dinners (necessary every year??)
- 2) Consider coordinating Cottage Dinners with Circle Suppers
- 3) Broaden the canvass committee by inviting additional project leaders (Suppers, publicity, etc.)

We'd like to thank and acknowledge the many people that helped make the canvass process work:

- **Steward volunteers (aka canvass team):** Pat Bartels, Janet Britcher, Jeff Cadow, Chip DeWitt, Suzanne Federspiel, Dan Fritz, Val Gunning, Anne Harvey Kilburn, Jami Jordan, George Maryniuk, Robin MacIlroy, Liz Scully, Jack Smith, Cindy Thames, Martin Thomson, Marilyn Tressel, and Ray Wellbaum;
- **Brochure design/graphics:** Jean DeBenedictis
- **Cottage Dinner hosts:** Jamie Redgrave, Katherine Chalette and Martin Thompson, Jean DeBenedictis and Gail Schoenbrunn and Paul McLean and Jody Leader.
- **Canvass Express table volunteers:** Julie Horvath, Bill Dwyer, George Maryniuk and Laura Walters.
- **Pre and post-canvass callers:** Joellen Hawkins, Jane Hoey and Jeff Cadow.
- **Musicians for the Gala Kick-off Sunday:** Martin Thomson, Pam Kristan, Ellie Boynton, Nick Page
- **Gala Sunday Food hosts:** Parish Committee
- **Behind the scenes:** Reverend Martha and Reverend Jim for their leadership and guidance, Sonya Abbott and Ingrid Johansson for helping us stay organized, Nick Peterson and David Willett for their time in discussions on how to better reach out to RE families, Karla Baehr for all the support from the Parish Committee.

Respectively submitted,

Steve Davis and Melinda Maryniuk  
Canvass Co-Chairs

### Appendix

Additional information:

Analysis of Data from Canvass as of April 25  
197 pledging units (PU)  
# 22 RE families that have not yet pledged

Distribution of pledges:

<u># PU's</u>	<u>Level of giving (\$ amt)</u>
4	\$10,000 -15,000
9	5,000 - 10,000
24	2,500 - 5,000
43	1,000 - 2,500
29	500 - 1,000
31	0 - 500
50	No response /pledge not yet complete

## CARING MINISTRY TEAM

The Caring Ministry Team has enjoyed its 4th year under the guidance of Rev. Martha. Members are Jon Hazilla chair, Jody Leader, Susan Larrabee, Val Gunning, Ellie Boynton, Judy Mason, Hank Reisner, Sue Andrews, and Madeline Fine coordinator.

The Caring Ministry Team writes cards of sympathy and celebration, arranges meals when there has been a birth or death in the family. The members offer transportation to medical appointments, and provide time limited help with home chores and pet sitting. The committee has launched several NEW affinity groups under the guidance of Jody and Susan.

They include: Peer support for launching senior youth, peer support for people who share a concern for elderly parents, Parenting group for young children, and special needs group for parents of special needs children.

The Pastoral associates are seeking to deepen their understanding of pastoral care and offer caring ministries that might take different forms. Pastoral associates make connections with individuals by phone, or in person at the request of the co-ministers. Extensive training has been offered within our regular meetings (role play). The Pastoral Associates are: Jon Hazilla, Val Gunning, Ellie Boynton, and Madeline Fine.

Meeting 4th Monday of every month

Membership: volunteer, Pastoral Associates by invitation

2009 Highlights:

- Listening Workshop
- New Affinity Groups launched
- Special Service of Celebration and Remembrance
- Special Invitation Meeting with Jim and Anne to integrate Care Team better with their specific areas within FP
- One Woman Show (Sharon Kennedy)
- Chair attended seminar at Belmont UU Church "When Bad Things Happen" exchanged ideas with their Care Comm. and Lay Ministers

Future Projects and Goals:

- 5 Wishes Seminar
- Retreat
- Create a Charter
- Seminar on "When Bad Things Happen" offering a spiritual approach and clinical approach (guest speaker )

## COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY (CoM)

The mission of the CoM is to consider, understand, facilitate, and support the evolving ministries of First Parish in Brookline, through monthly meetings with the Ministers and the DRE. Our agenda is adaptive and flexible, allowing for response to issues as they arise.

The CoM provides feedback to the Ministers and DRE as they request it. We also take on specific projects throughout the year at the discretion of the committee and under the advisement of the Ministers, DRE, and Parish Committee.

This year, our projects included a response to the motion made at the 2009 Annual Meeting First Parish to *“begin and follow through a process similar to Welcoming Congregation, focused on making our congregation more welcoming to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.”*

After much discussion and reflection, we proposed to the Parish Committee a Diversity Ministry Team, whose mission is to oversee, energize, support, and create programs on diversity issues by drawing on many resources. Our full recommendation follows this report in the Annual Meeting book.

The Parish Committee accepted this recommendation and asked for nominations. We reached out to the congregation and were able to assemble an inaugural group from an enthusiastic pool that reflects a diversity of age, gender, ethnicity and experience: Greg Buckland, Michele David, Ann Gilmore, Charles Fuller, Jody Leader and Mike Luke.

Most recently, the Ministers have asked the CoM to act as the Sabbatical Committee during the upcoming minister sabbaticals. In churches with only one minister, a separate committee is developed, but in our case, the CoM is the logical support for that minister and the congregation. Reverend Martha will take her sabbatical first, taking five months of the six that her agreement with First Parish stipulates, from January 1<sup>st</sup> through June 1st. Reverend Martha's sabbatical goals are rest and renewal, study and the exploration of resources for spiritual direction. She will attend and lead several retreats in California, France, and Boston. Travel with family, painting and curriculum development are in the planning stage.

Other CoM conversations this year included support of the DRE ministry, the ministry of canvas, the ministry of music and our own evolving ministry in our growing church, which we continued to explore in a Dialogue Circle held with the Parish Committee.

The CoM aspires to practice, promote and model right relationship and to help all members understand and live our safe congregation practices.

**2009-2010:** *Gail Schoenbrunn, Chair; Steve Davis; Reita Ennis; Jen Guillemin; Mary McCarthy; Carol Spitzer; and Midge Wilcke.* Our members serve for three years.

Submitted by Gail Schoenbrunn for the Committee on Ministry

November 2, 2009

Dear Members of the Parish Committee:

We, the Committee on Ministry, have been working over the summer and into the fall on our charge from the Parish Committee to explore and recommend ways that First Parish can move with intention and care toward "a process similar to Welcoming Congregation, focused on making our congregation more welcoming to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds." Our process has been lively and rich, requiring us to be thoughtful, creative, and forward-thinking in approaching, with gentle hearts, such an important topic.

Our discussions lead us to the following thoughts/recommendations:

1. First Parish needs to create its own program. There is no "off the shelf" option which could meet our needs and take advantage of the wealth of resources and already existing programs at First Parish.
2. COM recommends that the Parish Committee create a **Diversity Ministry Team** which will oversee, energize, support, and create the programs on diversity issues at First Parish. We suggest that this team have members who are recruited for their offering of different perspectives on race/cultural issues as well as other diversity issues such as age/sexual orientation and some for their experience and expertise in creating programs designed to begin conversations about diversity and to increase comfort with the language of difference.
  - a. This team's charge would include:
    - i. To assess the needs and readiness of the community in terms of programs available
    - ii. To create an environment of openness to discussion and sustainable change, not to "solve" the issue
    - iii. To recognize and embrace that this journey needs to include celebration and fun, too. We aim less to fix ourselves and more toward becoming whole by appreciating difference.
    - iv. To weave into the work of all extant committees and programs conversations about diversity. For instance, Small Group Ministry, the Book Club, Social Action, our performances (music, art, movie night) could all make a commitment to taking on projects that would celebrate and spark conversations about diversity issues.
    - v. To identify and train seasoned, gentle, and wise facilitators to help with the integration and moving through of these experiences. We recognize that there will be "pain points," some foreseeable and some not, which will require these facilitators. We would hope that via exposure to such facilitators, all of us will grow in our ability to be there for each other in painful moments. In groups, for instance, one person could be appointed "guardian" to monitor how the other members of the group are faring and to check in with members. We will need facilitators at all points in the process to help us learn how to listen and learn from what we are experiencing.
    - vi. To invite outside speakers to First Parish to bring in new ideas and perspectives. Some of the people we thought of are Alice McIntyre, Rev. Bill Sinkford, and Thandeka

- b. Representatives from the Committee on Ministry will be available to meet with the Diversity Ministry Team as it gets started to further share our thoughts and initial conversations to help keep the momentum going.
3. Some of the outcomes/signposts that we are achieving what we intended might be:
  - a. An increased ability to speak freely about race
  - b. An increased appreciation of the level of diversity that already exists in our community.
  - c. A change in our sense of what's normative
  - d. A greater facility with the "language of difference."
4. We recommend that there be a liaison between the Diversity Ministry Team and the Parish Committee.
5. We suggest that The Diversity Ministry Team share its efforts and observable result at the Annual Meeting or in another forum, as appropriate. (Our concern is that the Annual Meeting has a busy agenda and that another meeting or forum might allow for more interest and better sharing about this work.)
6. We believe that the Diversity Ministry Team will eventually require a budget to achieve its goals in the years ahead.
7. We recommend that the charter for the Diversity Ministry Team does not have an "Expiration date." We believe that this work has no finite end point in a community that aspires to be inclusive and welcoming to all.

All of these thoughts and suggestions are offered in the knowledge that ultimately First Parish's striving for the creation of a community more welcoming of people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds has a spiritual foundation and will require the practice of pastoral care. We thank the Parish Committee for the opportunity to participate in this important process.

Respectfully submitted,

The Committee on Ministry

This year The Committee on Ministry consists of Steve Davis; Reita Ennis; Jeannette Guillemin; Mary McCarthy, MD; Carol Spitzer; Midge Wilcke; and Gail Schoenbrunn, Chair.

We meet with the Rev Martha Niebanck, Rev Jim Sherblom and DRE Anne Principe.

*The Parish Committee accepted this recommendation, after reinforcing that the work to be done would be the responsibility of the congregation and not just the six people serving on the committee. The Parish Committee then asked Committee on Ministry to assemble the first group.*

## COMMUNICATION GROUP

**Chair:** Paul McLean

**Members:** Jean DeBenedictis (design/graphic arts), Ellie Boynton (web/technology), Sonya Abbott (staff liaison/communication coordinator), Paul McLean (writer/editor)

The Communication Group, established in Fall 2008, is essentially a task-oriented collaborative playing to the skills and talents the three individual member endeavoring to facilitate robust communications throughout First Parish in a manner honoring the congregational goals of community, intimacy and growth. The Group seeks to develop consistency and order in the way we communicate, both within the congregation and with our larger community, utilizing printed and electronically disseminated documents, the church website, bulletin boards within the church, outside media, etc. Also to play a supportive role to the church leadership and staff especially the Co-Ministers, Church Administrator, and Committee Chairs in addressing communications needs and issues as they arise.

### **Accomplishments**

- Continuing what began as a collaboration with the Welcome Team (Membership), Jean DeBenedictis designed and published an additional three in a series of brochures of introduction to First Parish and its assorted programs. The series now includes five brochures, focusing on welcoming new members and visitors, describing the RE program, FP history, path to membership, and social action.
- Following her redesign of the FP website, Ellie Boynton maintains website's design and function. With Sonya Abbott and Paul McLean, Ellie is developing a Rentals page to encourage revenue from outside usage. Ellie also has expedited the process of posting minister sermons on the web.
- Jean DeBenedictis designed and produced the Canvass Brochure, in collaboration with Canvass Co-Chairs; promotional posters and materials for the Ross memorial concert; and facilitated reprints of the Stained Glass brochure.
- Led by Parish Administrator Sonya Abbott, we facilitated the move to a primarily electronic newsletter, for both economic and environmental reasons.
- Created and presented to Parish Committee for approval a set of guidelines for FP communications. In Spring 2010, Paul McLean began addressing the problem of a static FP Facebook page by adding new material. In the first week of providing new content, Facebook visits doubled.

### **Tasks for Next Year**

- An important task, and one larger than the current Communication Group can effectively deal with, is the church's move toward social networking. A commitment is needed to administer this area (both Facebook and NING), whether as a paid position or by recruiting a volunteer. This is an area with ramifications for congregational growth, especially among younger adults.

- Assess need for and produce additional brochures; update/reprint current brochures as needed.
- In Summer 2010, Ellie Boynton hopes to install new software to increase ability of others to make informational updates and changes on the website. Currently, Ellie handles virtually all updates herself, and we'd like for staff and some others to have this ability.
- Continue providing support as needed and as possible for Parish Administrator, Co-Ministers staff and committees.
- Replace rainbow banner, which is becoming faded. Also replace Summer Worship banner and acquire new Wayside Pulpit posters so updates can be monthly.

## **Our Gratitude**

We could not have done our work without the help of a number of collaborators, including photographers David Hawkins and Keith Grove; the Welcome Team and coordinator April Trussell-Smith; Anne Copeland and our Social Action team; cabinetmakers Ann Dinsmoor and Jonathan Bartels; the co-ministers and RE director; FP historians Bill Dwyer and Frank Hutchins.

The Communication Group also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Sonya Abbott, who regularly goes over and above the call in doing the hard work of administering for this congregation.

**DEACONS**  
**Annual Report for 2009-2010**

During the calendar year at First Parish in Brookline, the Deacons participated in several moving memorial services and will have assisted in four communion services by calendar year-end. Of note, attendance at the communion services continues to grow, with the most recent service in March having twenty-eight attendees.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dwyer, Senior Deacon

Chris Beasley

Sheila Hussey

Laura Walters

Midge Wilcke

Bob Williamson

**FUNdraising**  
**Barbara Simonetti - Coordinator**

**Purpose / Mission Statement**

The purpose of FUNdraising is to meet our need to raise more funds and to have fun doing it. We also seek to build a stronger sense of community and to extend our reach into the larger community. Unlike other committees, we seek to support other committees and groups in adding a fund raising component to their activities while equally serving the mission of the church and their committee. The idea is to have no one group be responsible for raising too much and to keep an equal focus on fun and funds. Membership has consisted of changing teams of people with relevant experience and interest in a particular project. Barbara Simonetti serves as “continuation” consultant to support this effort. Examples of past projects have been the Obama Inauguration Party and the Arts for the Planet Event.

**Accomplishments**

**Children’s Stuff Swap, Fall 09** – In accordance with social action’s emphasis on the environment, the children were asked to bring in toys and games that they were no longer using so we could “reuse and recycle”. These were sold on two consecutive Sundays to other members of the church. The event realized \$182.30. Excess donations were brought to Boomerangs, an organization in JP that sells used goods to raise money to care for AIDS patients.

**Yule Fuel Sale, December 09** - Several members brewed Yule Fuel (Nut Brown Ale) which was given to attendees of the Christmas Feast in exchange for a modest donation. \$141.00 was raised and a good time was had by all.

**Night to Remember Concert and Dinner –March, 10** - This was the dream of our beloved Paula Ann Ross, to have a concert to rejuvenate the legacy of her brother and our long time minister of music, Rev. John Andrew Ross. The event included a soul food dinner and performances by many greats of the jazz and gospel world including Carla Cook, Vivian Cooley-Collier, Paula Elliott, Milton Wright, Paula Wood, and Rollins Ross. Opening words about the life and work of both Paula and John Ross were given by Margaret Burnham and Barry Gaither of the National Center of Afro-American Artists. There were also performances by the First Parish Junior Choir lead by Lynn Beasley and the First Parish Senior Choir coordinated by Anne Copeland. The event was also an occasion to bring many members of the African American Community and the greater Boston/Brookline Community into our church as working partners and attendees. Over 350 people attended the concert and 250 the dinner. Expenses for the event were about \$9K and included 2 extraordinary charges of \$1,500 to permanently increase electrical capacity in the sanctuary and \$900 to create credit card capacity for the church. An underwriting gift of \$7K from Paula Ross enabled us to realize the original revenue target of \$10K for the general fund of the church and an additional \$6K towards a special fund to repair our organ. It was a wonderful evening. One long time church member said that in all her years at First P, she had never seen so much joy in our sanctuary. It was a “Night to Remember.”

**Listing of individuals that provided special assistance**

Katie Mathieu and all of the families who provided toys for the stuff swap. John Hazilla, Dan Jones and Charles Sandmel our brew masters. Everyone who worked on the Night to Remember including: Paula Ann Ross, Executive Producer, Barbara Simonetti, Producer, Pamela Wood,

Artistic Director, Rollins Ross, Music Director, Beth Deare, Video Director, Ray Wellbaum, Concert Coordinator, Anne Copeland, Choir Coordinator, Midge Wilcke, Stage Manager, Karen Campbell, Publicity, Charles Sandmel, Finance, Rhonda Parsip, Caterer, Jeanne DeBenedictis, Relish Design Graphics and Sonya Abbott, Karla Baehr, Chris Beasley, Lynne Beasley, Jon Bartels, Pat Bartels, Eliza Blanchard, Jeff Cadow, Jan Childs, David Collins, Audrey Coulter, Amy Donahue, Emma Donahue, Kagan Donahue, Madeline Fine, Maria Gonzalez, Chris Grier, Pablo Lebret-Gonzalez, David Hawkins, Joellen Hawkins, Jane Hoey, Dianne Isaacson, Sophia Jay, Dan Jones, Ingrid Johannson, Rev. Carol Johnson, Mary McCarthy, Ruben Pollard, Frank Peace, Mary Rogers, Laura Walters, Bill White

**GUILD FUND**  
Annual Report

August 27, 2010

For the Fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, the disposition of the proceeds of the Guild Fund has not been finalized.

The Committee made appropriate contact with personnel of the Brookline Public School system to determine if there were any staff in need of financial assistance from the Guild Fund. As yet, no response has been received. The proceeds will be distributed in a timely manner, in accordance with the terms of the fund.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen von Lichtenberg  
Chair, Guild Fund

**INVESTMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**2009-2010**

What a difference a year makes. As of March 31, 2009, our endowment had plunged \$1,128,756 (-35.9%) to \$2,015,631 for the five quarters since January 1, 2008, reflecting the worst period in U.S. stock market performance since 1931. Gut-wrenching to say the least! As of March 31, 2010 our endowment has made a significant recovery to \$2,509,661 (net of scheduled withdrawals). Our investment return for calendar year 2009 was 29.3% vs. a balanced fund yardstick of 35.6% and a 3.2% return vs. the same yardstick of 3.8% for the first quarter of 2010. Although our returns were slightly below par, they, nevertheless, were respectable, especially considering the outsized obstacles the market presented and the sizeable losses experienced by many endowments of major non-profit institutions. Needless to say, we still have a long way to go to return to the past high water mark for our endowment, which is now more difficult as a result of making planned withdrawals while suffering a rapid market decline.

For our fiscal year July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010, our planned annual withdrawal was kept at the previous fiscal year's level of \$195,000, with an allocation of \$115,000 for operations and \$80,000 for capital requirements; i.e., "bricks and mortar." At present the endowment's weighting in equities is approximately 70%, with the balance in cash and fixed income securities. During the past year, the international equity portion of the portfolio has grown gradually for diversification purposes and it is expected that it will continue to do so when advantageous.

On a positive note, as of this writing (April 27) about 80% of the companies from the Standard & Poor's 500 that have reported earnings for the first quarter have topped analysts' expectations. For the remainder of 2010, S&P has forecasted that profits will increase by another 29%, the largest overall growth rate since 1998. How much of this is a function of government stimulus money remains to be determined. Furthermore, last week the International Monetary Fund raised its forecast for worldwide growth for this year to 4.2%, while cautioning that current public debt levels globally may have severe consequences. In short, while we are not out of the woods yet, the recovery appears to be real and profits are strengthening even if our financial "wall-of-worry" remains ever-present.

Lastly, the generosity of our members and friends over the years has made possible our endowment and the vital financial support it provides. We continue to give thanks for this blessing. This year we extend a special note of gratitude to the family of Joan Weiss, our dear friend and long-time member, for a very generous gift to our endowment in her memory.

William Dwyer, Chair  
Brad Reich  
Rich Suter

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Committee Members:** Suzanne Federspiel, Maureen Giovannini, Mike Luke, Gail Schoenbrunn, Will Spears (Chair), Gene Thompson-Grove

**Minister Member:** Rev. Martha Niebanck

**Mission:** To identify and connect prospective leadership talent with First Parish's leadership needs, additionally to develop leadership skills within the First Parish community, and offer support and consultation to existing leadership and committees

**Ministry:** To help members discover their best opportunities to participate in the life of the community in ways that:

- enhance our First Parish goals of community, intimacy, within a growing congregation
- contributes to members' spiritual and personal growth
- help develop leaders and leader skills for the congregation

### **Accomplishments:**

The Leadership Development Committee continued its evolution from a Nominating Committee to one focused on supporting the Parish Committee's goal of transitioning to a new model of governance; one better suited to our growing congregation's needs. This "Policy Governance" requires that the individual committees assume the responsibility for decision making and implementation. In response to this charge, LDC, for the second year, has formulated a series of leadership training sessions, delivered at the program council meetings.

### **Program Council Meetings:**

The committee took ownership of the Program Council this year. These meetings were originally established to improve communication and coordination between committee chairs, but now have also become leadership coaching sessions. The Program Council meetings occur four times a year for half a day, and are attended by all of the chairs of the church's various committees. The goals of the Program Council meetings have been:

1. Improve the leadership skills of the committee chairs, and the effectiveness of their committees
2. Provide leadership skills appropriate to a faith community
3. Strengthen the connections between committee chairs, while sharing information on issues of importance to each committee.
4. Provide an opportunity for the Parish Committee Chair to share her vision and goals with the other committee chairs.

Leadership topics discussed at these sessions included: recognizing different leadership styles, using dialogue circles as a process of discernment, understanding the nature of group processes, exploring how leadership in a faith community may be different than in a corporate environment, learning how to frame powerful questions, and thinking about what conditions have led to success in the work of First Parish Committees.

### **Assistance to Committees:**

LDC was instrumental in setting up the Stained Glass Window organizing Committee, by identifying members of the congregation that were well suited and interested in participating in this work.

LDC is working with the Parish Committee in its effort to bring clarity and transparency to the PC nomination process, and to the selection process of the Parish Committee Chair.

**Nominations for the Annual Meeting:**

The committee continued to evolve the process used last year, attempting to identify criteria in the nomination process for the Church's standing committees: Parish Committee, Religious Education Committee, Finance Committee, and Leadership Development Committee. Emphasis was placed on bringing new faces to the work of the committees and those seeking increased engagement in the church community, while seeking a balance of age, sex, interest and skills.

**Special Thanks:** The committee wishes to give special thanks to Karla Baehr who worked closely with us on the Program Council Workshops, and to Rev. Martha for her enthusiasm and support.

## PROGRAM COUNCIL as of MAY 2010

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>CHAIR(S)</u>	<u>CONTACT INFORMATION</u>
Adult Programs	Julie Horvath	<a href="mailto:adultprogramschair@firstparishinbrookline.org">adultprogramschair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Buildings and Grounds	Bob Williamson Liz Martin	<a href="mailto:buildingsandgroundschair@firstparishinbrookline.org">buildingsandgroundschair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Canvass	Steve Davis Melinda Maryniuk	<a href="mailto:canvasschair@firstparishinbrookline.org">canvasschair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Care Ministry Team	Jon Hazilla	<a href="mailto:carechair@firstparishinbrookline.org">carechair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Committee on Ministry	Gail Schoenbrunn	<a href="mailto:comchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">comchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Communications	Paul McLean	<a href="mailto:communications@firstparishinbrookline.org">communications@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Deacons	William Dwyer	<a href="mailto:seniordeacon@firstparishinbrookline.org">seniordeacon@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Finance/Treasurer	Jim Womack	<a href="mailto:financechair@firstparishinbrookline.org">financechair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Good Times	Liz Scully Lynne Beasley	<a href="mailto:goodtimeschair@firstparishinbrookline.org">goodtimeschair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Historic Preservation	William Dwyer	<a href="mailto:historicpreservationchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">historicpreservationchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Investment	William Dwyer	<a href="mailto:investmentchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">investmentchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Leadership Development	Will Spears	<a href="mailto:ldchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">ldchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Parish Committee	Karla Baehr	<a href="mailto:parishchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">parishchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Personnel	Ray Wellbaum	<a href="mailto:personnelchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">personnelchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Religious Exploration	Nick Peterson David Willett	<a href="mailto:rechair@firstparishinbrookline.org">rechair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Social Action	Anne Copeland Jack Smith	<a href="mailto:socialactionchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">socialactionchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Technology	Ellie Boynton	<a href="mailto:techchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">techchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Welcoming Team	Jane Hoey Liz Scully	<a href="mailto:membershipchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">membershipchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>
Worship	Cindy Thames Almas Dossa Ron Wilkinson	<a href="mailto:worshipchair@firstparishinbrookline.org">worshipchair@firstparishinbrookline.org</a>

## **MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR**

### **Annual Report**

**May 1, 2010**

**Welcoming Team:** Jane Hoey and Liz Scully, Co-Chairs - Members: Hank Reisner, Sally Dwyer, Chris Beasley, Steve Sweet

**In Memoriam:** An Annual Report of the membership team would be remiss without mentioning the loss of Welcoming Team member and consummate greeter, Paula Ross. She will be missed.

**This year has been a banner year for the Welcoming Team which saw 39 new members added to the membership rolls (May 1, 2009 to May 1, 2010). Over the course of the year we welcomed 149 visitors at Sunday services.**

**Below are some of our projects:**

**Name Change:** This year, in order to have their committee name reflect more clearly their purpose, the *Membership Committee* changed its name to the *Welcoming Team*.

**Visitor Packets:** Beginning in September, we designed and launched new Visitor Packets which include information about First Parish and Unitarian Universalism. The packets are packaged in a folder marked "Welcome" and include a special First Parish reusable shopping bag.

**New Member Packets:** Just this month, we launched our New Member Packets which include information of interest to new members of First Parish. The packets are packaged in grey folders and are kept with the Membership Book for distribution by the ministers.

**New Member Recognition Ceremonies:** Twice this year we recognized new additions to the First Parish membership during services on November 1 and May 2.

**Newcomer Lunches and eXploring First Parish:** This year we held six informal Newcomer Lunches and two formal eXploring First Parish orientations. We will be holding one last XFP for the year on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Newcomer Lunches are designed to be inviting to people of all interest levels while XFP sessions are specifically for those considering membership at First Parish.

**Hospitality:** One of the new tasks the Welcoming Team took on this year was hospitality sign-ups. We ran a campaign to encourage people to sign up in groups so that no one person need commit to providing more than a third of the coffee hour fare. We also encouraged committees and small groups to sign up to provide hospitality and collected money in order to buy cookies and crackers for weeks when no one signed up for hospitality.

**Ushering:** In addition to greeting on Sunday mornings, the Welcoming Team took over the task of ushering as well for Sunday services this year.

**Connecting with Newcomers:** The Welcoming Team continues to encourage engagement among newcomers by connecting personally with visitors and new members at newcomer events and through our follow-up calling system. We worked this year on tweaking and streamlining the system and look forward to its continued success next year.

**Thank You's:** As Membership Coordinator, I would like to extend special thank yous to the people whose help was invaluable in completing the work of attracting, retaining, and engaging newcomers. To Jane Hoey and Liz Scully for their enthusiastic leadership and to the committee for lots of hard work and energy. To Sue Andrews, Patsy Bachiller, Joellen Hawkins, and Marilyn Tressel for volunteering to help the committee as visitor follow-up callers. To the Teaching Parish Committee and Laura Walters for signing up as Sunday greeters. To Ann Dinsmoor for putting her sewing skills to work making us more rainbow stoles for Sunday morning greeting. To all the many people who helped out by attending Newcomer Lunches and providing hospitality. Finally, I'd like to thank Sonya Abbott for administrative support throughout the year.

And thank you, First Parish, for a great first year as your Membership Coordinator. We'd all like to thank you for making friendliness and a welcoming atmosphere priorities at the church. Looking forward to another productive year with you,

*April*  
April Trussell-Smith  
Membership Coordinator 2009-2010

## **MUSIC DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

May 2010

Music Director: Danica A. Buckley, 2006-2010

### **The Choir:**

- Volunteers: 10-20 voices
- Paid Professional Section Leaders: Elizabeth Eyerer, Soprano Kathryn Johnson, Alto  
Adrian Jones, Tenor Jesse Turner, Bass

**Guest Musicians:** Many from congregation as well as from New England Conservatory, Berklee, Boston Conservatory, MIT, and professionals from Boston area

**Assistant:** Ellie Boynton was, for the second year, a regular substitute for Danica on her Sundays off.

**Expanded Choir and Instrumentalists:** On several occasions (e.g., Christmas, Easter, Music Sunday), the Director has successfully recruited members from the community to join us for pieces where a larger sound is desirable. There has also been increased use (with great success) of guests instrumentalists from within and outside of our church community to improve the musical experience during worship.

### **Junior Choir - Lynne Beasley, Interim Junior Choir Director**

The Jr. Choir performed most Sundays, singing the Introit, Chalice Lighting Responsory, and/or an Anthem. In addition to Sunday Services, the Jr. Choir also performed on Christmas Eve, Good Friday Tenebrae Service, and at the John Andrew Ross Jazz and Gospel concert. The year began with 5 singers, grew to 15, and then with attrition settled into a choir of 11 (when all were there). We look forward to another growing year next year.

**Music Director Transition:** Upon news of Danica's resignation, Charles Fuller was asked to head a Music Director Search Committee of Anne Copeland, Ray Wellbaum, Joe Horning, and Greg Buckland to find a new Choir Director for the coming year. The position was reduced in hours and pay from Music Director to Choir Director. At the time of this report, several candidates have auditioned, but the committee is still in the interview and audition process. The new Choir Director will begin in August, 2010.

David Collins agreed to a job-share with Danica for the remainder of the year, beginning in February. He rehearsed the choir on Wednesdays and was choir director and pianist on Sunday mornings. Danica did the worship planning, the music notes, and any other administrative tasks appropriate. Her last service was June 13, 2010.

### **Music Director's Farewell:**

Dear People of First Parish,

I have enjoyed working with you to make your singing more confident, in choir and congregation. I have loved creating meaningful musical experiences at First Parish, and I am grateful to my colleagues and the congregation for a significant learning and growing experience.

I wish you all the best and many music-filled moments.

Sing on!  
Danica

## PARISH ADMINISTRATION

2009-2010

Where has the time gone? In August of 2010 it will be five years that we've all been working together, yet it seems like only yesterday that you hired me and oh what an interesting five years it's been.

In the beginning my schedule was part-time to provide general office assistant, today I'm a full-time parish administrator with oversight responsibility in many areas from the regular weekly routine of maintaining the data base, streamlining on-going systems and developing new procedures, to working closely with a variety of committees (canvass, communications, buildings and grounds, to name but a few), to supervising your two custodians and handling the often very time consuming negotiations of space usage and rentals. It's always an interesting juggling act to deal with the many requests and often times demands that come in from all sorts of people (or the building) during the course of a day and throughout the year. My days are never quiet and hardly ever boring.

Naturally all of this wouldn't be possible if I didn't have help from many others. During the week I interact with and rely heavily on our custodial staff, in particular Frank Peace for maintaining the building. Other staff members I have almost daily email connection with and I usually see everyone a few times a month at staff meetings or special services. Besides staff though there are still others who help make the workload lighter and they need to be recognized - in no particular order: Ann Dinsmoor, Pat and Jonathan Bartels, Ingrid Johansson, Linda Smith, Ellie Boynton, Paul McLean, Bill Dwyer, Lynne Beasley, Hank Reisner and especially Meredith Williamson who helps with the weekly order of service folding. Thank you one and all for your continued presence, kindness, assistance and wonderful spirits. I know there are many others that should be on this list. Actually it is an endless list for there are many that help out all the time, very quietly and unknown - even to me, and I do very much appreciate all that everyone does, and I do appreciate (although my waste line doesn't need) the surprise ice cream treats one member will bring me on occasion or the flowers from others.

First Parish is so obviously growing and I'm honored to be part of its journey towards becoming a medium size church. So while I will continue to respect the boundary that this is your church and not mine and at times I will purposely take steps back from over involvement with larger events, do remember that I will, when needed or asked, continue to step back in and fully support you to the best of my abilities. May the next year, be as fruitful, as the past five have been.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sonya Abbott  
Parish Administrator

## **RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE** **2010 Annual Report**

### **Committee**

The Religious Exploration Committee met on the second Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings were held in Lyon Chapel or at the REC member's home over dinner. Nick Peterson and David Willett were co-chairs for the Committee. Other Committee members included: Mike Hart, Suzanne Federspiel, Stacey Raczek, Leslie Spaneas, Ann Dinsmoor, Beth Graham and Matt Etemad-Gilbertson. The Director of Religious Exploration, Anne Principe participated in Committee meetings. Martha Niebanck was the minister assigned to REC.

Suzanne and Stacey will be rotating off the Committee in June 2010. Leadership Development Committee has identified two new members who will start in June. Nick Peterson will be rotating out of the co-chair position, but will remain as a committee member. Ann Dinsmoor has been nominated to fill the co-chair position along with David Willett.

### **Foundational work**

This year, we focused on manifesting a culture of personal connections within the committee. We started the year with an RE retreat. At the retreat we spent much of the time learning about each other. Our connections to one another became evident. In addition, we developed a covenant\* that laid the foundation for working together. The retreat was lead by all members of the RE team including Rev. Martha.

Our next initiative was to develop our own Mission, Vision and Goals\*. Although all of us actively worked on this process, we must acknowledge Mike Luke and Ann Dinsmoor who tirelessly and patiently walked us through a very complicated process. Our Mission, Vision and Goals are a living document that we turn to as we develop plans and make decisions.

Finally, we updated our role descriptions for the Director of Religious Education, RE co-chairs and REC members\*\*. The job descriptions provide specific descriptions of the roles and expectations of performance.

Our congregation has been transitioning to a Policy Governance model. We have successfully implemented change and planned our future within the framework of Policy Governance.

*\* see attachments for copy of covenant, mission, vision and goals*

*\*\*see attachments for RE Co-chair and RE Member Role descriptions.*

### **Community Response**

For the second year in a row, we have administered a midyear survey. Our results have provided insight into what our community values and how they would like to participate in RE. Our community would like to feel more connected and would welcome opportunities to meet other families. In addition, the survey respondents (both with and without kids) have indicated a willingness to donate their time. We have an active list of volunteers that will help us realize all of our teacher and special event needs.

### **Professional Support**

REC was represented at Program Council and benefited from the information shared and connections with other 1<sup>st</sup> Parish committee representatives and leadership.

REC has had the support of the Leadership Development Committee who identified and recruited community members to participate on REC.

Co-chairs met with Rev. Martha and Rev. Jim to check in, discuss Policy Governance, plans for modifying DRE hours (from FT to  $\frac{3}{4}$  in 2010/2011).

David Willett attended a Parish Committee meeting and gained understanding of Policy Governance.

At each meeting, committee members took turns as minutes scribe.

Sonya has coordinated administrative processes for co-chairs as appropriate.

### **RE Classes and Groups**

The RE program offered the following Sunday morning classes and curricula this year: Pre-K/K (We are Many, We are One), Grades 1-2 (Spirit Play), 3th/4th grade (Toolbox of Faith), 5th/6th grade (The Questing Year), 7th grade (Neighboring Faiths), 8th grade (OWL), 9th grade (Challenge).

The classroom configurations and curricula are re-assessed each year and adjusted for the next year as necessary or advisable based on numbers of children at each age, evaluations of curricula, and space constraints.

Our class groupings will be changing next year. The new groupings will be pre-K, K; 1<sup>st</sup> grade; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. No changes are planned for the older class groups. The new groupings allow better ratio of children to teacher ratio and also decreases the number of volunteer teachers needed.

This year teachers reported that the Spirit of Adventure curriculum was difficult. Anne Principe, along with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers reviewed options and successfully changed curriculum to Toolbox of Faith.

This year we had an increased demand for nursery services. A 2<sup>nd</sup> staff member is budgeted for next year.

This year we realized the importance and impact that teacher communication with parents can have. Attendance was greatly enhanced in classes where teachers sent weekly reminders and updates about their classes. Teacher orientation and setting expectations is the foundation.

### **Fun and Games Sundays**

Fun and Games Sunday's have been scheduled on low attendance Sundays. Teacher participation on Fun and Games Sundays has been sporadic even though each class is expected to contribute one teacher from their teacher team. Coupled with low child/youth attendance, a decision has been made to reduce the number of Fun and Games Sundays next year.

### **Youth**

Mary Helen Gunn has been coordinating Youth programming this year. REC has not been directly involved in any of the Youth planning or activities.

Respectfully Submitted, David Willett, Co-chair and Nick Peterson, Co-chair  
Religious Exploration Committee

**RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE**  
**MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS, CRITICAL ISSUES,**  
**January-June 2010 GOALS**

**MISSION**

The heart of our mission is to deepen the spiritual experience of children, youth and families, and to support their learning how to live out UU principles and values. We seek to accomplish this in three primary ways: 1) by providing religious exploration that is developmentally appropriate; 2) by supporting teaching and volunteering as spiritual practice; and 3) by making connections with others and engaging them in meaningful relationships – extending what we experience and practice in our own deepening relationships within the RE Committee.

**VISION**

**A developmentally appropriate religious exploration program:**

1. Programs for all ages and life stages that are developmentally appropriate and highly engaging, meaningful and compelling;
2. Programs and activities that celebrate community;
3. An environment that supports children, youth and families to learn and live out UU principles and values;
4. Parents are supported in the challenges of parenting;
5. Opportunities for deepening inter-generational relationships;

**Teaching and volunteering as spiritual practice:**

1. A vibrant volunteer community in which adults understand their responsibility and are inspired to participate in the cooperative RE program and also know and experience teaching and volunteering as spiritual practice;
2. Relationships among adults that inspire development of co-teaching commitments.
3. We aim to redefine the recruiting process where people no longer consider whether they will teach, but rather what class they will teach and whether that class is available; if they did not sign up quickly enough to get the class they wanted then they may identify a person that they would like to know better and teach a different class with them.

**Engaging others in meaningful relationships:**

1. Patterns and habits of interactions that are meaningful, so that each child, youth and adult is known and knows at least a few others well
2. Wherever two, three or more are gathered together, we are intentional about making connections and deepening caring relationships

**CRITICAL ISSUES**

1. Recruiting teachers in a timely and ‘painless’ manner
2. Understanding what we mean by increased participation and engagement
3. Increasing regular attendance of children and fuller engagement of parents in their own spiritual practice;
4. Clarifying roles and responsibilities of DRE, REC leaders, REC members, and REC’s role in a growing congregation
5. We may need to consider modifying our current church school model to conform to the available resources, if we are unable to secure the participation of sufficient number of teachers/volunteers to support the current program.

## **GOALS, January-June 2010**

1. REC members will define, understand and begin to implement a governance model for the REC, consistent with the intentions of the Parish Committee.
2. After clarifying what we mean by engagement/participation in the RE context we will focus on establishing and promulgating clear expectations for adult engagement in the RE program.
3. We will be successful in timely (springtime) recruiting of parents and non-parents to commit to teaching next year.
4. We will evaluate our programs by a) refining the metrics we use for measuring engagement; b) defining measures of success; c) establishing ways of getting feedback from teachers, parents and children who are involved in REC activities; and d) developing effective ways to report this information to appropriate individuals and committees in the church.
5. We will begin to clarify REC's role and responsibilities in the wider organizational structure of the church regarding lifespan faith development and the many activities that involve families and children; youth programs; young adult group; and the many adult educational programs.

**First Parish in Brookline**  
**Co-chair of the Religious Exploration Committee (REC)**  
Role Description (2010)

**Religious Exploration Committee (REC):** The RE Committee consists of seven (7) members and two (2) REC Chairs (co-chairs). The RE Committee carries out the goals set forth by the Parish Committee as it is relevant to Religious Exploration programming.

**Role:** The co-chairs in collaboration with the DRE and supervising Minister will work to maintain a quality religious exploration program within the Lifespan Faith Development Program at First Parish in Brookline.

**Term:** REC co-chairs will serve two year terms, alternating succession yearly for continuity. The REC co-chair role is not an elected role, but selection will be an open process conducted by the REC.

**Accountability:** The co-chairs are accountable to the Minister and work in collaboration with the DRE. Each co-chair should be able to commit at least two to four hours per week to RE activities.

**Qualifications:** Candidates for serving as co-chair of the REC should be active members of the church, a member of the REC, preferably have already served one year on the REC, be involved in congregational life, and have a deep commitment, knowledge and/or experience with religious exploration. Must find joy in leading a team that will develop a vision for UU RE, planning projects and follow through until completion. The co-chairs should be able to form open and loving relationships with community that will facilitate the work and religious experiences.

**Areas of Responsibility and Main Duties:**

*Policy and Governance:* Co-chairs must have a strong foundation and understanding of Policy Governance including relationships and responsibilities to staff members and other governing committees.

*Program Council Meetings:* At least one co-chair should represent the REC in the four Program Council Meetings that occur every other month within the church year. Incorporate experiences and training into RE committee work.

*Planning and Development:* Co-chairs must have complete understanding of short and long term goals established by the Parish Committee.

*RE Classroom Liaison Assignments:* RE Co-chairs are responsible for coordinating the assignment of RE members to their Classroom Liaison roles for the church year, in collaboration with the DRE. It is recommended that RE Members not liaison a class which their child attends.

*Religious Exploration Committee (REC) Retreat:* In collaboration with Minister and DRE develop retreat programming, agenda and host the event. There are at least one or two planning meetings with DRE, Minister, and facilitator prior to retreat event. The REC Retreat should occur following the Parish Committee Retreat once goals for the year have been established.

*Monthly DRE Meeting:* Mandatory attendance for co-chairs. Meeting with DRE to determine monthly RE meeting agenda, discuss real-time concerns and review yearly planning calendar. The co-chairs are responsible for writing up the agenda and emailing to RE committee members prior to next meeting.

*Monthly RE Meeting:* Mandatory attendance for co-chairs. The co-chairs preside over the meeting and determine who will be taking minutes. Minutes should be completed within several days after meeting and emailed to committee members and the First Parish Administrator. DRE will report/status of RE program including subjective and objective data from the previous month and any other areas that need REC oversight.

*Impromptu Meetings:* At least once per 4 to 6 weeks, mandatory meetings will occur that require co-chair attendance. These usually occur on a weekday evening or Sunday.

*Religious Exploration Programming:* In collaboration with the DRE, oversee the coordination of RE Sponsored Programming and Events. Programming includes RE age appropriate curricula, multi-aged programming during low-attendance Sundays, and RE Sponsored Family and Intergenerational Events. The co-chairs and DRE should be conduits for RE programming feedback from the community to ensure the mission of REC and goals of the Parish Committee are met. It is strongly suggested that co-chairs experience Sunday RE once a month to assess the quality of the work and to be accessible to volunteers.

*RE Volunteer Recruiting and Support:* The co-chairs will oversee the coordination of teacher recruiting well in advance of classes beginning. While recruiting is a continual process of engagement, the filling of teaching positions for specific classes typically begins in late February for the following church year commencing in September. In collaboration with the DRE, oversee the coordination of teacher orientation for incoming teachers.

*Advocate for Religious Exploration at First Parish in Brookline:* In collaboration with the DRE and fellow REC members, develop congregational relationships that will support the cooperative work and spiritual experiences of children, youth, teachers, volunteers and families consistent with the work of REC and goals of the Parish Committee. At least one, preferably both, RE Co-chair(s) should be present for RE Sponsored events and be accessible and present to the community and volunteers.

*Backup DRE on scheduled Sundays Off (Once per Month on Avg.):* While Sunday RE Programs are the primary responsibility of the DRE, co-chairs will provide high level support once a month when the DRE is schedule to be off.

*Volunteer to Lead RE Programming:* The RE program at First Parish in Brookline is a cooperative which means that it thrives on the energies and talents of all church members on a volunteer basis. A REC member is encouraged to actively participate as a volunteer.

### **Co-chair Limitations**

*The co-chair may not:*

- Initiate new programs independent of input and approval from DRE, Minister and committee.
- Change or add tasks to a team member's job description.
- Do the work of the DRE or of the REC.
- Assign a co-chair successor without the input of the REC.

**First Parish in Brookline**  
**Member of the Religious Exploration Committee (REC)**  
Role Description (2010)

**Religious Exploration Committee (REC):** The RE Committee consists of seven (7) members and two (2) REC Chairs (co-chairs). The RE Committee carries out the goals set forth by the Parish Committee as it is relevant to Religious Exploration programming.

**Role:** The members of the REC in collaboration with the REC co-chairs, DRE and supervising Minister will work to maintain a quality religious exploration program within the Lifespan Faith Development Program at First Parish in Brookline.

**Term:** REC members will serve a three year term, succession of three members yearly for continuity.

**Accountability:** The REC members work in collaboration with the REC co-chairs and the DRE. Each REC member should be able to commit at least one to two hours per week, on average, to RE activities.

**Qualifications:** Candidates for serving as a member of the REC should be active members of the church, be involved in congregational life, and have a deep commitment. Prior experience teaching in the RE program is preferable, however, knowledge and/or other experience may be considered equivalent.

**Areas of Responsibility and Main Duties:**

*Religious Exploration Committee (REC) Retreat:* Be present at and engaged in the REC retreat, which is held yearly.

*Monthly RE Meeting:* Attend monthly REC meetings facilitated by the REC co-chairs. Responsibility for meeting minutes is shared by REC members on a rotating basis and should be completed within several days after meeting and emailed to committee members. Members should be prepared to provide a status update for the classroom(s) they are liaison to, preferable in advance and in writing so that any concerns that need attention can be included in the agenda of the next monthly REC meeting.

*Classroom Liaison:* REC members will liaison to one or more classrooms each church year which consists of:

- Help incoming teachers get organized and distribute curricula. Teachers need to review the class schedule and commit to specific dates in writing. A schedule should be kept and a copy forwarded to DRE.
- Participate in Teacher Orientations. Participation includes providing refreshments, communicating with teaching team to confirm attendance, attending the orientation by sitting with teachers and leading discussions about teaching roles, curriculum, creating a classroom community, answering questions, assisting with planning, and providing direction.
- Facilitate RE Registration at the beginning of the church year. Work closely with teachers to ensure all students are registered at the beginning of the year and as new members arrive.

- Reach out to Teaching Team on class weeks and facilitate issue resolution. Check in personally with teachers at least twice per month to gather a sense of the community being formed among children, teachers, parents and the congregation. Notify DRE and REC of any potential concerns.
- Encourage Teachers to establish/maintain communications with Parents on a weekly basis. Each week of classes, teachers should email parents and relate/celebrate highlights of the previous week’s session along with a possible preview of the upcoming session. Liaison should be cc’ed on the emails and class listserv, maintained by the DRE, should be used for all such communications to ensure that the most up-to-date address list is being used. A key part of the teacher role is to engage and maintain relationships with parents.
- Distribute and collect curricula from teachers in advance of the first class and following the last class of the term/year.
- Participate in teacher appreciation celebrations. Help with planning, staffing, preparing refreshment, clean up etc.
- Collaborate and strategize with the DRE to address and minimize classroom challenges such as low attendance, space limitations, curricula concerns, etc.

*Advocate for Religious Exploration at First Parish in Brookline:* In collaboration with the DRE, REC co-chairs and fellow REC members, develop congregational relationships and possible programs that will support the cooperative work and spiritual experiences of children, youth, teachers, volunteers and families consistent with the work of REC and goals of the Parish Committee. The RE Committee should be well represented at all RE Sponsored events and RE members should plan to attend at least 3 through the course of the church year and be accessible and present to the community and volunteers.

*RE Volunteer Recruiting and Support:* Assist with the recruiting of teachers well in advance of classes beginning. While recruiting is a continual process of engagement, the filling of teaching positions for specific classes typically begins in late February for the following church year commencing in September.

*Volunteer to Lead RE Programming:* The RE program at First Parish in Brookline is a cooperative which means that it thrives on the energies and talents of all church members on a volunteer basis. A REC member is encouraged to actively participate as a volunteer.

### **REC Member Limitations**

*The REC member may not:*

Initiate new programs independent of input and approval from REC co-chairs, DRE, Minister and REC committee.

Change or add tasks to a team member’s job description.

## **ANNE PRINCIPE, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION**

This is the culmination of my fourth year serving First Parish in Brookline as the religious educator. This year has been both a continuation of growth and a time of new focus and initiative. Listed below is an overview of role that I play in supporting, coordinating, and developing various components of our religious education ministry.

### **Program coordination:**

- ⇒ Sunday RE programs – birth to Grade 9
  - REC Liaison Support
  - Family Outreach
  - Teacher Development
  
- ⇒ Sunday Worship
  - Theme-based Time for All Ages
  - Candles of Joy and Concern
  - Rites of Passage
  - Intergenerational Services
  
- ⇒ Multi-and and Intergenerational Events:
  - Halloween Party and Samhain Worship Circle in partnership with REC, Neighboring Faiths, OWL, Challenge, Worship Committee
  - M.A.D. Saturdays and Sundays in partnership with Social Action Council
  - Christmas Pageant, in partnership with youth and adult leaders and REC
  - Holiday Marketplace in partnership with service/vision teams to Guatemala and New Orleans
  - MLK Day of Service in partnership with service/vision teams to Guatemala and New Orleans and Challenge Homeless Mission
  - Parenting Gathering in partnership with staff and adult leaders
  - Fun-n-Games Sundays in partnership with REC and volunteer leaders
  
- ⇒ RE Committee
  - Collaboration and planning with co-chairs
  - Covenanting
  - Visioning and Mission
  - Program Development
  
- ⇒ Administration
  - data ministry
  - safe congregation Practices
  - space coordination and planning

It is through this detailed work that I reflect upon some areas of growth that I have witnessed and, hopefully, been a part of.

### **Growth in: Spirit and Meaning**

*From announcements to anthems, chalice lightings to choral responses, children are a key part of our experience of worship. Children are curious and naturally spiritual and teach us time and time again which part of our message is the Important Part. Children take this intuition into the hallways, into their class groups and to the many ways we come together as faith community.*

### **Growth in: Action**

*First Parish is a community highly engaged in keeping faith active through formal initiatives via programming and the natural ways that people come together in service, care and fellowship to others. There have been and will continue to be conversations about how we make social justice and action an implicit part of our living curriculum.*

### **Growth in: Community and Identity**

*With each of my own four years at First Parish, I am had the honor of bearing witness the subtle and significant growth in the connections that grow between us, among us, and from us. For example, finishing my second year with the newer program design of the Challenge Program, I see the direct result of how curriculum impacts culture. Finishing my third round of supporting full-year OWL programming, I see the power of expecting high commitment resulting in deep sense of belong and identity. Finishing my fourth year of supporting social action initiatives, I see how children come to real purpose and real action with pride and joy. And a last example has been witnessed how a group of four year olds adapted to the great challenge of their being so many of them, they needed a new place and made new friends.*

### **Growth in: Human Systems**

*The efforts by teachers, REC members and staff to better track attendance and communicate with families has been not only very beneficial but has directly impacted our collective ability to stay in touch with the substance of our personal and spiritual explorations.*

### **Growth in: Role of the Religious Educator**

*The scope of my position peaked this year in breadth and depth. With the steady implementation of policy governance in the congregation, the mounting questions about “who best to do what” were firmly caught and held by the wisdom that this way of doing church offers. At the same time, the factors of the economic climate manifested in many ways that called all of us to consider how we allocate resources of every kind. After due process by the ministers and many leaders, it was decided that the DRE position would be reduced from full time to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time beginning this July. While this feels like a loss at first, it is clearly an opportunity to continue to shape our program with the goals of sustainability and engagement in mind. The work of seeking and the work of spirit – is never done, thankfully. At the same time, knowing the limits that surround us and are within us surely will be the wise guide as we align our biggest dreams with our deepest sense of well being.*

### **Growth in: Professional Affairs**

- Coordinator: Ferry Beach Park Association Religious Education Week
- Sold publishing rights to the UUA for co-authored guidebook, “A Mission Within: Leading Mission Trips with Youth.”
- Enrolled in second and final year with the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine, a two-year interfaith program. Will graduate and be ordained an interfaith community minister in June.

### **Special thanks...**

*...to the people of this congregation for being so personally and genuinely engaged in the journey, to the leaders and volunteers who give tirelessly to be The Ones who make sure that our dreams come true, to a large and loud RE Committee who can both shake it up and bring it home, to The Boys who have co-led the RE expedition this year in their role as co-chairs, to a staff team who sees beacons in the fog (and who is also willing to be the fog horns too), and especially to all the children and youth who are cool with having to remind me all the time which they prefer – a high five or a hug.*

**SOCIAL ACTION FORUM**  
**2009-2010**

**Co-chairs:** Anne Copeland and Jack Smith

Gail Schoenbrunn has agreed to fill Anne's place as Co-chair when her term ends at the end of the 2010 church year.

**Members:** Membership in the Social Action group is rather informal – there are those actively involved in leadership of initiatives, others involved in regular ways in on-going projects, and others who attend occasional meetings. Happily, the list of those who are involved in initiatives and attend occasional meetings has grown too long to include in this report. Initiative leaders include:

**Environment:** Carol Spitzer, Ed Loechler, Clint Richmond, Anne Copeland

**Hunger/Food:** Jean Ashland, Jack Smith

**Economic Justice:** Jack and Linda Smith, Ed Loechler

**Standing on the Side of Love:** Linda Smith

In addition, a new and thriving initiative group has formed, focused on **Food Justice**, a confluence of the environment, hunger/food, and economic justice foci. Its facilitator is Sophia Johansson.

The group is actively supported by DRE Anne Principe and Rev. Jim Sherblom.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** The committee's purpose is to provide leadership, guidance and support to the variety of social action initiatives at the church.

**Accomplishments:** This year we continued choosing to focus on a small number of issues each year, in a series of month-long initiatives. Each initiative has these goals:

- Build community within FPB
  - Develop the expectation among all FPB members that every Sunday they will have an opportunity to share and learn about our collective social justice work.
  - Introduce all FPB members to four kinds of social justice work: service, education, witness, and advocacy.
  - Introduce more members to opportunities to do all four kinds of social justice work in community with other FPB members.
  - Identify opportunities for FPB members to do social justice work on schedules that fit different needs and interests: one-time, annual, monthly and weekly.
  - Expand the number of FPB members actively engaged in FPB social justice work
  - Deepen our members' identity as members of a faith-based social justice serving UU church by focusing attention of all FPB members on a single social justice issue.
- Build a stronger relationship between FPB and the wider community through our social justice work
  - Engage more members in social justice work sponsored by UU-affiliated organizations, e.g., UUA, UUUM, UUSC, MBD

During the 2009-2010 church year, we organized four month-long initiatives:

- Fall Green Initiative (October 2009), which included:
  - A special collection to be used to lighten our church building's carbon output,
  - Make a Difference (MAD) Saturday, an intergenerational event when we made storm windows, explored the church's trash vs. recycle ratio, and continued our conversation about recycling and composting
  - Film for Reflection
  - Continued education of congregation about using re-usable dishes and cutlery, use of our dishwasher, recycling. We now purchase re-cycled paper products throughout the church:

paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, and the paper in the office for all printed materials, including the Order of Service. We recycle more. More paper, more cans, plastic and bottles. We have put recycle bins throughout the church, next to regular trash cans, in order to increase the ease of recycling. We use real dishes rather than paper or plastic, except on rare occasions. We have bought enough new drinking glasses to avoid the use of paper cups most of the time. We do not use Styrofoam cups at all. We use the metal knives, forks and spoons in the kitchen and do not buy plastic cutlery. Sonya Abbott and Frank Peace have been very supportive of this initiative in their purchasing and product use.

- Supported a team of members to attend a workshop on church sustainability
- Encouragement to church members to engage in a “green mitzvah” each week
- Hunger/Food Initiative (November 2009), which included:
  - A worship service with a hunger and food centered theme
  - Hospitality following service with opportunities to support hunger organizations
  - A special collection for Renewal House
  - A bring-a-can food drive
  - Encouragement to church members to engage in a “hunger mitzvah” each week
  - Film for Reflection
- Economic Justice Initiative (February-April 2010), which included:
  - A service trip to New Orleans. A group of four First Parish members and several others traveled to New Orleans in February, to continue the work of re-building after Hurricane Katrina. The congregation was involved in this project through various fund raising efforts, and by the group’s written memoir, participation in a Sunday service focused on service, and special presentation to the church community.
  - A mission trip to Guatemala. A group of 11 First Parish members (plus one member’s nephew from California) traveled to Guatemala in April to support the work of Common Hope, a group focused on family and educational support of children. The congregation was involved in launching this project through purchasing amaryllis bulbs as a fundraiser to support one particular child through the Common Hope program; making several quilts from “Shirts Off Your Back,” to be given to families touched by our trips; following the program’s blog.
  - Film for Reflection
  - A special collection for Common Hope, the Lower Ninth Ward Health Clinic, and the Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association
- Standing on the Side of Love Initiative (May-June 2010), which will include:
  - Organized participation in the AIDS Walk, AIDS Harbor to Bay Bicycle Ride, and Gay Pride Parade.
  - Film for Reflection
  - Encouragement to church members to engage in a Standing on the Side of Love mitzvah each week
  - Book swap event to support AIDS walk participants
  - Special Collection

In addition, growing from the confluence of interest in the environmental, hunger and economic justice initiatives, a group focused on Food Justice has formed. In April 2010 it hosted a Sunday Hospitality Hour featuring locally-sourced, organic foods, and information about CSAs, sources, recipes and other opportunities to promote sustainable eating.

In addition to the special collections mentioned above, during the 2009-2010 church year, we supported the following through special collections:

- Victims of earthquake damage in Haiti, including supporting the travel of church member Dr. Michele David to travel to Haiti

We will be holding 4-6 initiatives during the 2010-2011 year, building on the already strong ministries within our church.

## STAINED GLASS COMMITTEE

**Committee Chair:** Sheila Hussey

**Committee Members:** Chip DeWitt, Sally Dwyer, and Rich Suter

**Committee Minister:** Reverend Jim Sherblom

**Parish Committee Liaison:** Jeff Cadow

**Committee Purpose:** Four congregational meetings, conversations, research and dialogue circles held during the winter of 2009 by the Parish Committee's Stained Glass Task Force resulted in the following consensus statement:

**We want to see a serious effort made to raise funds from within and outside First Parish to conserve at least the most valued of our stained glass windows with attention first to the Whitman Window. At the same time, we want to maintain our commitment to achieving financial sustainability by limiting our annual draw from our endowment to 4 to 6% of its value. We do not want to compromise that commitment to pay the cost of conserving our windows.**

**Progress:** A Stained Glass Organizing Committee, composed of the above named members formed in November, 2009 evolved into the Stained Glass Committee with the approval of the Parish Committee this January.

The Stained Glass Committee has taken as its mission to educate the public, and First Parish members, of the origin and historic significance of the existing stained glass windows at First Parish in Brookline and to restore and maintain those windows.

The Parish Committee authorized the SG Committee to enter into an agreement with the Brookline Community Foundation under which the Foundation will become the depository for funds raised by the Committee, will manage the funds, for a fee, and will deal with necessary administrative details.

A tour of our windows was held Saturday, March 27 with lectures given by Art History Professor Virginia C. Raguin of Holy Cross in Worcester and our own Frances G. Hutchins, Ph.D.

Committee members have visited UU Channing Memorial in Newport, Rhode Island and Wellesley College to learn from other restoration projects.

**Acknowledgements:** We recognize with gratitude the often lonely, indefatigable advocacy of the windows by Frank Hutchins. His research provides the basis of our fund raising efforts. He continues to be a priceless resource for our committee. All of his files are now at First Parish in a designated file cabinet. We thank Jean DeBenedictis for her excellent work in the design of the new Stained Glass Brochure.

**TEACHING PARISH COMMITTEE**  
**2009-2010**

**Members:** Jane Hoey, Joseph horning, Elizabeth King, Robin MacIlroy, Paul McLean and Charles Sandmel

After a hiatus of a year, we are once again delighted to have an intern. MaryHelen Gunn is with us half-time for this and next years under the supervision of Rev. Jim Sherblom and with the support of this teaching parish committee.

We began the year with a full day of training at Andover-Newton Theological School and now meet once a month with MaryHelen to discuss her progress, to support her in this work and to hear how she's doing toward fulfilling her learning agreement. We act as a sounding board as she works out her sermons and answer any questions she may have. We also talk to other members of the community and groups that she works with so that we may be of greater help to her in her quest to become a U.U. minister.

It's been a pleasure to work with MaryHelen and with this wonderful Committee.

Jane Hoey,  
Chair

## **MINISTERIAL INTERN**

This congregation's warm welcome for me and my family has been a rich blessing to me both professionally and personally. FPB is providing a wonderfully growth full, enriching and supportive learning environment for me in my ministerial formation. I am grateful to my Supervisor, Rev. Jim, and to co-minister, Rev. Martha, who have both been generous in supporting and guiding me as I develop and hone my capacities in ministry here: in worship, pastoral care, small group facilitation, and youth and young adult ministries. I am deeply grateful to my wonderful Teaching Parish Committee, chaired by Jane Hoey, who not only have been meeting with me monthly for support and feedback, but have also given me the gift of warm and caring support throughout my experience here.

### **WORSHIP**

By year-end I will have led worship four of our Sundays: November 15, January 3, April 18, and May 30. In addition, I have participated regularly in Sunday worship on the chancel—offering opening words, readings, chalice lightings, Time for All Ages, candles of joy and concern, benedictions, and even role-plays. I have co-preached once with Rev. Jim (in October). In conjunction with Anne, Danica and our ministers, I have participated in collaborative planning for nearly all worship services, including co-planning Tenebrae with Rev. Martha and Lynn Beasley.

### **PASTORAL CARE**

My pastoral care role this year has emerged primarily in my connections with parishioners through youth ministry, young adult ministry, and worship. This has included care for youth and their families, especially in times of illness and medical stress; care for seminarians and prospective seminarians; care for parents of young children; care for young adults in our OWL program; and pastoral conversations surrounding my worship themes, before and after I led worship.

Next year my supervisor and I intend for this aspect of my ministerial formation here to grow, building on the pastoral care skills I cultivated this year in my other half-time internship as a Spiritual Care Intern at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton.

### **YOUTH**

In Youth Ministry at FPB this year, it has become clear and widely agreed upon by youth and allies that a regularly-meeting, parish-based youth group is, at least at present, a need that is more idealized than real. We have turned our attention to supporting and celebrating the many ways several of our youth members, despite significant demands on their time and resources, are actively involved in both leadership and participatory roles in our congregational life. We recognize that our youth serve in mentoring roles with our younger members: conducting the Cherubs Choir, helping with the Pageant, caring in the nursery and Play Space, among many other roles throughout the church year.

As Ministerial Intern I have provided pastoral support to some of our youth who are facing health challenges and their families. We have also supported our youth in participating in the Social Action "Con" hosted by our Belmont congregation in February. Four of our own youth and one JP youth attended with our adult allies. Several youth have shared their own reflections and spiritual growth with the congregation from the lectern in Sunday worship, both from this Con, as well as from our Food Justice/"Just Pizza" party in November.

We are currently working to support our youth participation in year-end rites-of-passage transitions both in our congregation and at the district-level Bridging Con in June. Fledgling ideas for next year include exploring inter-religious conversations with our youth and youth in other Brookline congregations, as well as fostering additional ways for youth who are so inclined to broaden and deepen their mentoring roles with the younger members of our congregation. There is an expressed desire among some incoming Seniors to help there be a “there” there for the incoming Sophomores and Juniors next year. Those of us charged with leading our Youth Ministry will strive to help them in all the ways we can.

Special thanks here go to Meg Coward, co-facilitator, for her generous gifts of time, care, and talent; to all our devoted youth allies in this congregation; and to the parents of our youth.

### **YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

From February to May I have co-led, with Jen Dillinger, our Young Adult Our Whole Lives curriculum in human sexuality and spirituality. Jen and I received 24 hours of training in New York City last August in preparation. Nine young adults—including couples and singles, FPB members and non-members, have met weekly for fourteen 2-hour sessions, cultivating an experience of trust in community around intimacy, identity, sexuality, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I am pleased and gratified to report that this group appears to be coalescing in ways that are already transformative in the young adult ministries of our congregation. Our growth for closing this year and into next year lies in a)facilitating the opening of this group fellowship to all interested young adults and b)discerning growth-ful directions for young adult programming to be offered by ministerial staff.

### **PARENTSWING**

In response to a recognized need assessed in mid-year work by the DRE and RE Committee in cooperation with Ministerial staff, I launched Parentsing, a small group ministry for parents of children ages 0-4. This group will have met 6 times by year-end, and has to date drawn at least 6 parents, more than half of who have attended regularly, with several more expressing interest. Our task going forward will be to sustain and grow this group, and to cultivate lay coordination in conjunction with my continuing pastoral presence.

Childcare is provided; grateful thanks for Amy Donahue’s volunteering and Sharon’s staffing.

### **SURPRISE BLESSINGS**

It has been a “surprise” blessing to witness and provide support and pastoral presence for FPB’s emergent Food Mindfulness group this year. And it has been a blessing to have the opportunity to cultivate my ministerial relationship with our gifted DRE, Anne Principe.

It has been quite a year!

With gratitude,  
MaryHelen Gunn, Ministerial Intern

**TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**  
**2009-2010 Annual Report**

**Chair:** Ellie Boynton

**Members:** Sonya Abbott and Rev. Jim Sherblom

**Mission Statement:** To help the parish's staff and members make the best use of technology while performing their duties and missions on behalf of the church, considering users' abilities, reliability and complexity of systems, and financial constraints.

**Major accomplishments for 2009-2010:**

- Systems and equipment held up well this year.
- Updated FP website to include photos of people. Regularly updated home page to include upcoming events. Added more sermons, rental page, UU links, and current RE info.

Additional work included:

- Updating existing listserv subscription lists.
- Renewing the web hosting service and anti-virus subscription.

**Goals for 2010-2011:**

- Continued support of church staff and consideration of equipment upgrades/replacement.
- Continued development and updating of website to meet congregation's needs, including implementation of a Content Management System (CMS) and better menu navigation during Summer 2010.
- Train church administrator on how to update website using CMS.

**Thanks to...**

- Paul McLean for providing endless support, copyediting of sermons, writing and editing of other website text, and helping define website priorities.
- Jeff Cadow, for always being ready and willing to help.
- Sonya Abbott, for her exceptional organization skills, tactful reminders, excellent suggestions, moral support, and patience.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellie Boynton

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The financial situation of First Parish is shown in the appended proposed Budget for fiscal year 2011. The key item to note is that we continue to struggle as a congregation in achieving revenues that support our costs without over reliance on our endowment.

Over the past five years we have made substantial progress in increasing our pledging but we have also increased our expenses to support a growing program. At the same time the value of our endowment has declined due to the recession and may have declined permanently due to long-term problems in the American economy.

While we have agreed that we should only transfer 5% of the long-term value of our endowment each year to support the church building and our programs, we drew about 6.5% of the three-year trailing average value of the endowment in fiscal year 2010 and are proposing to draw about the same percent in fiscal 2011. (And these levels of draw from the endowment were only achieved by deferring about \$40,000 of needed building maintenance during fiscal year 2010, with another \$40,000 of maintenance proposed for deferral in fiscal year 2011.)

While we are not in an immediate crisis, the pattern of drawing from the endowment at a level higher than the "sustainable" 5% while deferring maintenance cannot continue indefinitely. The Treasurer therefore proposes that First Parish undertake a comprehensive study during fiscal year 2011 of additional sources of income, with particular reference to creative uses of the church building to increase revenues through events and shared use of the building during the week with other organizations.

The Treasurer would like to express gratitude to Ingrid Johansson, the Controller, for her diligent work during a difficult year, and to the many members of the congregation who have provided assistance to the Treasurer in his first year of service in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Womack

**WORSHIP COMMITTEE**  
**Annual Report 2008-2009**

**Committee co-chairs:** Cindy Thames, Almas Dossa, Ron Wilkinson  
**Committee members:** Lynne Beasley, Gerry Leader, Adele Mathieu, Steve Sweet,  
Lisa Underhill

**Committee Purpose:** The committee works with the ministers and the congregation so that First Parish has a full year of weekly worship services, holiday celebrations, and worshipful activities that speak to our diverse spiritual needs.

**In the past year we have**

1. Participated in a committee retreat where we renewed and revised our mission and covenant, shared our experiences of when we had felt the presence of the holy, and made plans for the coming year.
2. Presented services with ministerial support: winter and summer solstice celebrations, Seder and Tenebrae, and made plans to take a more active role in Samhain.
3. Launched an affinity group to sustain and develop our earth-centered celebrations and look into other ways to celebrate our connections with the physical universe
4. Developed a nine-week summer service schedule, recruiting and scheduling worship leaders, assistants, musicians, and helping with program development.
5. Publicized our special services
6. Held dialog circle on how to increase engagement in worship.
7. Decided to increase size of committee and started recruiting new members

**Plans for next year**

The Worship Committee will continue with the above activities with a particular emphasis on what becoming a program church means to worship and our committee and lay engagement in worship. We will continue to nurture the earth-based affinity group.

**Gratitude**

We are grateful to all the members of the First Parish community for their enthusiastic participation with us in lay-developed services, to the musicians, the cooks, the artists, the worker bees, and all those who bring their open hearts and spirits. We extend special thanks to Frank Peace and Sonya Abbott for their support and patience.