

**FPB Board Minutes  
Tuesday, January 7, 2019  
7:00-9:00**

Present: Gene Thompson-Grove (co-chair) – via Zoom; Karla Baehr, Ellen Blaney, Janet Britcher (co-chair), Micaela Coady, Dave Demerjian, Steve Pratt-Otto, Charles Sandmel, Bob Williamson  
Others: Rev Lisa; and guests: Almas Dossa, Ann Malone, Ron Wilkinson (for Racial Justice Action Committee – RJAC); Sara Warren (for Space Use Task Force); and Sue Andrews

**Call to Order**

- Co-Chair Janet Britcher called the meeting to order with a chalice lighting and reading of Maya Angelou's poem *Continue*. We took turns reading our Covenant:  
*To be our best selves and do our best work we will:*
  - Mission: Commit to the three parts of the Mission (Called by Love, Sustained By Commitment, Committed to Justice) in order to accomplish meaningful work and so that our decisions are always values-driven
  - Generosity and Forgiveness: Bring a spirit of generosity for self and others that creates a safe space for all
  - Space: Make space for all kinds of voices and ways of engaging
  - Honesty: Bring and welcome honesty and challenging questions
  - Limits: Take responsibility individually and collectively to set limits and ask for help
  - Joy: Nurture spiritual growth, personal connections and joy
- Our "fun and connecting" activity was a napkin relay race!

**Racial Justice Action Committee (RJAC)**

- We welcomed and invited RJAC members to report on RJAC's work over the past two years. They focused on the past two years, focusing on: 1) the goals of the First Parish partnership with DEEP, 2) key activities, and 3) its responses to congregational feedback prioritizing congregational conversation and action related to 1) Worship/Sanctuary, 2) Membership/Welcoming, 3) Governance/ Transparency / Communication, 4) Endowment/Money, and 5) Family Conversations about Racism. They highlighted ways RJAC efforts have influenced FPB conversation and action.
- They updated the Board on tentative plans for using the \$5,000 grant to FPB that the Board has asked the RJAC to shepherd; ideas focus on 1) support for RE and children, 2) continuing to build capacity of white members of the congregation to be more effective anti-racism "allies", 3) direct support for organizations beyond our doors that are led by people of color.
- They proposed that the Board:
  - Create an opportunity to "reintroduce" RJAC to the congregation as an inclusive group and to demonstrate the impact RJAC efforts have had on the congregation
  - Sponsor one or more shared leadership meetings – using the consensus model for decision-making – focusing on capital planning and the Sanctuary pews
  - Continue its support for the RJAC
- Board discussion with RJAC members focused on:
  - Connecting the Board's plan for a congregational conversation about money\* with the RJAC's interest in seeing the congregation have opportunities to have deep conversation about capital planning in such areas as stained glass, pews, and handicapped accessibility
  - The sensitivity required in conversations such as these

\*what values about money are reflected in FPB culture and how members see how money is or can be valued

## Updates

- **Immigration Justice Committee (IJC)**
  - Ellen Blaney reported on behalf of the Immigration Justice Committee (IJC) that following First Parish's *Immigration Justice Accompaniment Training* with Beyond (Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network) and congregational fundraising for their Bond and Legal Defense Fund - both in 2018 - housing has emerged as a crucial need for our immigrant neighbors who have applied for asylum. In addition to host homes, individuals and family members require support with costs of legal representation and living expenses, rides, and accompaniment in navigating a range of issues and situations. The home host is joined by a team of allies who work together to meet the neighbor's requests and needs.
  - The Board indicated its support for deepening our relationship with Beyond through a congregational effort, facilitated by our Immigration Justice Committee (IJC) under the leadership of the board, to participate in the network's housing accompaniment initiatives.
  - Rev Lisa urged consideration of an interfaith effort to provide these supports for our immigrant neighbors.
- **Congregational Engagement Committee** – conversations about money in our values and culture
  - Rev Lisa and Karla Baehr sought Board advice on the timing of the conversation; it was agreed to hold two conversations, one a family-friendly Friday evening on March 13<sup>th</sup> and another after service on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>
- **Ministers' Report (attached)**
  - Rev Lisa offered highlights and responded to members' questions
- **Spring Fundraiser**
  - The 2019-20 budget called for raising \$5,000 through a fundraiser.
  - The Board discussed timing and the need for a community-building component to any fundraiser
  - The Board reached a high degree of consensus to defer the fundraising event from this fiscal year to next fall to give sufficient time to design and implement a community-building process and event.
  - Charles Sandmel will consult with the Men's Group to see if its members might be interested in leading this effort on the Board's behalf
- **Upper Parking Lot Driveway Report**
  - Bob Williamson reported that progress is being made on treatment and next steps for assessing options; it has been learned that paving is not an option because of Town requirements for adequate drainage

## Preschool Rental and Renovation (Brookline School Staff Children's Center – BSSCC)

- Sara Warren reported for the Space Use Task Force on progress and developments in efforts to secure a long-term rental agreement with BSSCC to renovate and occupy the first floor (current Dana, Lilac and Meditation rooms and bathrooms)
- The Board reached a high level of consensus to authorize the Space Use Task Force to pursue negotiations that could include FPB providing up to \$200,000 of the estimated \$500,000 cost to renovate the first floor, such funding to be paid back through rental income from the renovated space within 10 years (3 4's and 5 5's)

**Canvass Team for 2020 Canvass**

- Steve Pratt-Otto, Whit Larrabee, Karla Baehr and Micaela Coady have agreed to serve as the Canvass Team for the 2020 Canvass
- In order not to coincide with the planned congregational conversation about money and its place in First Parish culture, it was recommend that this year's Canvass be held for a three-week period starting in mid-to-late March and concluding by mid-April, in time for final Board budget deliberations in advance of Annual Meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>

**Parish Board Leadership**

- Janet Britcher and Gene Thompson-Grove have agreed to serve as co-chairs through the end of this church year

**Approval of December Minutes**

- Minutes for the Board meeting of December 8<sup>th</sup> were approved via email vote prior to this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr, Clerk