



Minister's Report
August 26, 2020

Opening Words: Quote from UU Views of Faith in the Workplace **

Overall: It has been a quiet summer at First Parish, with virtual worship services and committee meetings. Our community has been fortunate not to have had many deaths or other losses due to Covid-19, as we watch other Boston communities struggling and try to figure out how to help.				
	Ministerial Observations	Ministerial Wonderings	Ministerial Flags	Ministerial Celebrations
Governance and Leadership	The Reopening Planning Group (RPG) has been meeting over the summer. Subgroups on safe practices and sanctuary services will report back to RPG and make recommendations to the board.	Question: Who will make a final decision (and how soon) about any in-person gatherings (worship services, small groups, etc.) either inside or outside our building this Fall?	Have we had conversations with possible organizers to confirm their willingness to organize a fall/winter fundraiser (online auction)?	New board had a fun and connecting session two weeks ago, thanks to Janet's leadership!
Staff	Alisa and Lisa have decided to hire Oppong Serebour (a former PT staff member) 5-8 hours/week to connect with maintenance vendors (heating, exterminator, etc.,) do extra cleaning, as needed, and check on the building weekly.	We will be deciding this Fall whether there is a need to hire a live-stream technician, depending on whether we are able to livestream and/or hold an in-person services in the sanctuary.	Laci has been working full time, remotely, planning programming, staying in close contact with RE families and committee. She will submit a monthly report to the board this year. Staff is preparing for the church year and will have a worship planning retreat on 9/8 .	Staff have all enjoyed much-needed vacation time and are looking forward to the church year.
Worship, Ritual and Ceremony	Summer worship services went well. Zoom coffee hour with	Worship and welcoming committee have joined to ensure	Worship team has been discussing whether some	Summer worship services have all been very well-received. Kudos to

	candles of joys and concerns was very much appreciated.	that worship services are as welcoming as possible in our virtual space. We will be figuring out what visitors and regular participants need to feel a sense of belonging and connection.	worship services may be live-streamed from the sanctuary this fall. Live singing is the biggest hurdle. We will continue to brainstorm creative ways to engage our congregation and to enliven our worship experience.	Alisa for many, many hours of video editing and production.
Congregational Life and Spiritual Development	The Pastoral Care team and small group leaders are planning a variety of small group offerings this fall, to respond to and support the needs of our community.	We had a small number of visitors this summer, with a few filling out visitor cards. We'll need to figure out ways to connect with them virtually this fall, e.g. virtual newcomer breakfast and intro to First Parish and UUism sessions.	Lisa and Laci will be brainstorming ideas for adult programming. Ideas welcome!	We will have a small, family-only, outdoor, child naming ceremony for Joey Alm (Fitzmaurice) on August 29, which will be shared with the congregation at our ingathering service on 9/13.
Community Engagement and Social Justice	IJC has continued to work on supporting immigrants and others in need, with the Chelsea Collaborative. Funds have been secured for rent support and bail bond, through partnerships with private donors and Beyond.	B&G has completed its initial step in the driveway remediation project, the "test pit." B&G needs to make decisions about next steps.	RJAC is planning more events for the community related to BIPOC justice, including talks, films and discussion formats. #UUtheVote continues its regular get-out-the-vote activities, which are likely to ramp up in coming weeks. Thursday phone-banking is starting up again; this action-oriented meeting has engaged many of our congregants.	RJAC sponsored a very successful event with Raul Fernandez; an online conversation about "Reimagining Police Safety." Around 35 FPB members attended this educational and community-building event. Madeline Fine and her gardening volunteers have planted a beautiful perennial garden around our BLM banner. Kudos to this group for their dedication and persistence in this time of drought.
Finance and Administration	Our 2020 end-of-year statement is a positive reflection of our combined efforts at "belt-tightening" and monitoring expenses.	Looking forward to discussing the goals set and questions raised by the Finance Committee about fundraising and stewardship.	Rentals: Alisa is in active communication with the Lin Center about their plans for the Fall, which seem to be moving ahead. The Sai Center is still considering whether they will	Finance Committee had a very energized first meeting under Margaret Williams' leadership!

			have any in-person services this fall. A few “one-off” rentals may occur.	
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****Cheng Imm Tan, From UU Views of Faith in the Workplace:**

How do you express your faith in the work that you do? How do religious values and spiritual practice challenge your work life?

As an immigrant Asian woman who came to the United States twenty-three years ago, I saw this country as the land of opportunity, freedom, and equality. I also saw injustices related to race and class. In 1991 I was ordained a UU community minister. Currently, I practice ministry in Boston as the director of the Mayor’ s Office of New Bostonians. I meet with leaders from diverse immigrant communities to address the key issues of language, culture, and immigration, as well as discrimination. There is no question in my mind that oppressive structures need to be changed.

Everyone loses when racism prevails. There is no opportunity to learn from the wisdom of different people or experience the wealth of different cultures. We find interconnection and build our capacity to care and create justice together through learning each other’ s histories and stories of struggle

How do activists who want to eliminate injustice and oppression avoid getting caught in their own egos, agendas, and delusions? How do they avoid recreating another set of oppressive structures? To keep moving forward, I’ ve learned that I also need to stop and be still—to listen to the truth of who I am, be gentle in the places where I struggle with myself, and be kind to those parts of myself that I reject or judge harshly. Meeting “internal enemies” is the spiritual work of self-love. I embrace them with the same spirit of acceptance and love that I try to hold the world in. This is the spiritual work I need to do in order to keep embracing justice in the world and embracing all of myself with a loving heart.