



First Parish Mission: We strive to be a welcoming, diverse and loving congregation that nurtures spiritual growth for individuals and families, celebrates multicultural community, and works together to demand social justice, dismantle racism, and care for our living earth

**Minutes
Parish Board Retreat
Saturday September 19, 2020**

Present: Karla Baehr, Janet Britcher (chair), Alfred Brownell, Emily Cherry, Micaela Coady, Jen Guillemin, Steve Pratt-Otto, Bob Williamson, Margaret Williams, Rev Lisa Perry-Wood

The retreat began at 8:35 with a chalice lighting and moment of silence for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. To center us for the day's work, Rev Lisa read an excerpt from Kahlil Gibran's Work is Love Made Visible. After reestablishing and deepening our personal connections with one another through two pair exercises, *I Am* and *Song Title competition*, Janet reviewed the purposes of the Retreat:

- Deepen relationships
- Create new board covenant to ensure engagement that is meaningful,
- Establish board goals for the year,
- Learn and practice a brainstorming model, *Question Burst* and a communication/connection model, *Head, Heart, Hands*, that can help us listen more deeply to ourselves and others;
- Create board charter to ensure agreement on our scope.

Goals for 2020-21

Members practiced with *Jamboard*, an application designed to enable us to simulate the use of flip charts and post-it notes. We then used it to lay the groundwork for developing Board Goals for 20-21. by responding in changing small groups to a succession of prompts:

- (Individually, then pairs) *Why did you first come to FPB? Why do you stay? What keeps you committed?*
- (new pairs) *Tell a Story about a time you felt most connected with, committed to and proud of FPB*
- (whole group) Identify emerging themes about what drew us here and what we are saying "Yes" to
- (individual and trio) *Name 3 dreams, hopes and aspirations for what FPB can be, do or become*
 - Each person in trio offered 3 and trio consolidated and chose 5 to share out
- (whole group) Consolidated lists, reviewed 2019-20 Board Goals and progress, then generated first draft of goals to consider for 2020-21, and assigned members to revise and bring to Board for adoption on October 4th:
 1. Develop and implement a process to support the congregation to determine the role of our financial resources in fulfilling our mission (Margaret and Steve)
 2. Establish and implement processes/framework for evaluating community and spiritual health; identify information we need (Micaela and Karla)
 3. Convene representatives of groups to explore and establish a digital strategy that supports innovation to ensure we thrive in the new normal of social distancing (Margaret and Alfred)
 4. Social Justice and Anti-Racism (Karla and Jen)

We added as on-going goals from last year:

5. Establish clear expectations of and evaluate our Senior Minister
6. Ensure the budget is developed and monitored in an inclusive and transparent way

We concluded our goal development work by sharing “reasons for optimism” about accomplishing these goals

Covenant

Having developed a first draft of the WHAT of our work for the year ahead, we developed a first draft of the HOW we will do this work together, i.e., our covenant. We responded in small groups to these prompts:

- What will maintain your energy and engagement for our Board work?
- What values and practices are important to you for us to incorporate in our Board work?
- What will make our work meaningful and satisfying for you?
- To be our best selves and do our best work, we will...
- At the end of this Board year, I want to be thinking this and feeling:
 - What would have happened for that to be the outcome?

As a full Board, we consolidated each trio’s responses, discussed their meaning and identified high priority requirements. Janet will refine this initial draft, get to Board members for review and comment, and then bring a revised draft for review and adoption at the Board’s October 4th meeting.

We further built our personal relationships after lunch by sharing photos we took during a voluntary “lunch photo scavenger hunt”.

Tools and Frameworks for Doing our Work Together

We learned and practiced two tools and frameworks we can use to make our work together more effective and purposeful:

1. Micaela and Bob introduced “*Question Burst*”, a 4-minute questions brainstorm activity designed to generate new insights about problems, particularly persistent ones. We applied it to the challenge of recruiting RE teachers
2. Emily and Bob introduced us to “*Head, Heart and Hands*”, a framework the Reopening Planning Group (RPG) is using for categorizing questions about and responses to challenges and issues as coming from the “head”, “heart” or “hands” in order; the purpose of the framework is to help participants recognize and understand multiple perspectives more readily. We applied it to the questions to the challenge of gathering at church outside in cold weather.

Parish Board Picture

We took Gallery photo of the Board with Rev Lisa to update the Board page on the FPB website.

Updates and Check out

- Janet invited new trios to “meet for coffee” on October 1st at 7:00 (or at another mutually convenient time before our next Board Meeting:
 - (1) Margaret, Bob & Jen (2) Micaela, Steve & Emily (3) Karla, Janet & Alfred
- Janet referenced the list of deferred topics in today’s agenda.
- Our next Board Meeting is Sunday, October 4th from 1:00 to 3:00
- We checked out individually by describing how a particular phot represented what we had learned at today’s Retreat. Members expressed much appreciation to Janet (and Micaela, Bob and Emily) for the thorough planning and flexible facilitation that made the planning retreat especially effective.

The retreat ended at 3:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr, clerk