



First  
Parish  
in Brookline

A WELCOMING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

# Annual Report 2017-2018

***Called by Love  
Sustained By Community  
Committed to Justice***

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A WELCOMING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

## **ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA**

May 20, 2018

- Call to order by Moderator (Bob Williamson, Moderator)
- Chalice lighting and ministerial blessing (Rev Rebecca)
- Recognition of members of Transition Team, and Ministerial Fellowship Team (Rev Rebecca)
- Recognition of members of Search Committee, outgoing Parish Board members, and outgoing Committee Chairs (Michele David, Chair of Parish Board)
- Approve minutes of 2017 Annual Meeting (Alice Mark, Clerk)
- Recognize and elect new members (Elena Garofoli, Membership Committee)
- Elect officers and committee members (Sue Andrews, Nominating Committee)
- Bylaws presentation and vote on bylaws amendment (Sue Andrews, Bylaws Committee)
- Budget presentation and vote on Fiscal Year 2018-2019 (Ben Davis, Treasurer)
- Any other business (Bob Williamson)
- Hymn (Nathan Freitas)
- Extinguishing the chalice (Rev Rebecca)
- Adjourn

### **Ground Rules for Congregational Meetings**

1. One speaker at a time
2. Listen with an open mind
3. Speak for yourself ("I")
4. Tell your own truths and let others tell theirs

### **MISSION**

**Called by Love, Sustained By Community, Committed to Justice**

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.

### **New Parish Members**

The following 14 people have signed the membership book since our last Annual Meeting:

Margareth Olsson  
Emma Brubaker  
Deane Coady  
Henning Willers  
Shruthi Mahalingaiah  
Leigh Smith  
Amy Stoffelmayr  
Alissa Schmidt  
Karin Broadhurst  
Lauren Bobay  
Tim Stefanski  
Leon Latino  
Gena Mavuli  
Mehdi Behroozi

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

The Nominating Committee nominates the following members:

For Parish Board Chair	Michele David
For Treasurer	Charles Sandmel
For the Parish Board	Janet Britcher Stephen Pratt-Otto
For Nominating Committee	Ray Wellbaum

Respectfully submitted,  
Alice Mark  
Clerk of the Parish

**First Parish in Brookline**  
**Minutes of the 300<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

**May 21, 2017**

**Call to Order and Quorum was established by Moderator Bob Williamson at 12:48 pm**

Bob presented the meeting agenda, called attention to ground rules for congregational meetings, and expressed thanks to all for all of the work that has been done this year.

**Chalice Lighting and Ministerial Blessing**

Rev. Rebecca shared a reading and a blessing. Ann Dinsmoor presented the congregation with a white oak table she created to hold the chalice in Lyons Chapel, with design support from other church members. Rev. Rebecca gifted a knit runner for the table.

**Approve Agenda**

A motion to accept the meeting agenda was **approved**.

**Approve 2016 Annual Meeting Minutes**

A motion to accept the minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting was **approved**.

**Affirmation of Resolution to Become a Level 2 Sanctuary**

Ellen Blaney, representing the Immigration Justice Committee, read a statement that affirms last year's annual meeting resolution to support Sanctuary.

**Recognize and Elect New Members**

New members were asked to stand and be recognized. The following 31 people signed the membership book since the 2016 Annual Meeting:

Jennifer Allaire, Jeremey Allaire, Barton Bracken, Emily Bright, Anne Brown, Alfred Brownell, Bessie Brownell, Julia Burch, Rebecca Cavallaro, Deane Coady, Janice Evans, Jessica Firing, Max Hogue, Tania Gurian, Erin Kelly, Patricia Kinsella, David Krewinghaus, Whitfield Larrabee, Kate Lavelle, Sarah Luchansky, Emerson Lynch, Nancy Marks, David Moir, Nora O'Farrell, Brian O'Halloran, Jean O'Halloran, Sally Regan Ruderman, Adam Wilson, Kim Wilson, Margaret Wood, Lawrence Zaborski

A motion to accept these new members was put forth, seconded, and **approved**.

## **Recognize General Assembly Delegates**

A motion to approve the listed General Assembly delegates was made and seconded.

Priscilla Brown, Greg Buckland, Michele David, Martha Leader, Anya Thomas

Delegate emails will be included in the next Weekly Update for any member to contact with thoughts or questions. The proposed delegate list was **approved**.

## **Elect Officers and Committee Members**

It was moved and seconded to approve the slate of Officers and Committee Members presented in the annual report. A call was made for additional nominations from the floor. The motion to elect the following Officers and Committee members was **approved**.

Clerk of the Parish	Alice Mark
Treasurer	Ben Davis
Moderator	Bob Williamson
Alternate Moderator	Katherine Chaurette
Parish Board	Dave Demerjian
	Charles Sandmel
	Gene Thompson-Grove
Nominating Committee	Melinda Maryniuk
	Laura Walters
	Ron Wilkinson

## **Paper ballot vote for Ministerial Search Committee**

Sue Andrews described the process to be followed to select the Ministerial Search Committee. Each member should select four names from the ballot and the top four will be on the committee. The Parish Committee will select an additional three at the June 5 Board Meeting. Several minutes were allocated for participants to complete ballots and they were collected.

## **Announcement re: Bylaws Work for 2017-18**

Sue Andrews will serve as Chair of the Bylaws Committee after her term as Parish Committee Chair. She shared that Section 8 of church Bylaws states that anytime a withdrawal larger than what the Endowment has earned is requested there should be two meetings to approve it by 2/3 vote. This was not addressed in February when a withdrawal was made. There will be a vote today and the

Bylaws committee will provide opportunities for the congregation and Board to discuss options for dealing with withdrawals from the endowment next church year. A motion to confirm was **approved**.

### **Budget Presentation and Vote on Fiscal Year 2017-18**

A motion was made and seconded to accept the 2017-18 budget as presented. Treasurer Ben Davis presented the work of the Finance Council and Finance Committee this year, including a December launch of budget development to provide timely information for the Canvass process and two congregational budget meetings in April to review proposed budgets.

Ben presented the 2016-17 budget as approved and the estimated actual income and expenditures for this year. This year was the largest Canvass in FP history: 72 households increased their pledges, there were 15 new pledge units, and the total pledge amount represented a 6.5% increase over last year. Ben also noted the addition of designated Sunday offerings this year and reported that income from non-designated Sunday offerings was actually larger than projected.

Ben detailed the proposed 2017-18 budget, including an endowment draw of 7.8%, about half the way to an endowment draw goal of 4.5%. After discussion, no changes or amendments to the proposed budget were made.

A motion to adopt the proposed budget for FY 2018 was **approved**: 48 votes in favor, 0 votes against and 2 abstentions.

### **Hymn (This Little Light of Mine)**

#### **Extinguishing the Chalice**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:15.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacey Raczek  
Clerk of the Parish

## **INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER 2018 REPORT**

Dear friends,

I write this column for the annual report with great joy and pride. I hope that you share the sense of goodness that encapsulates our shared ministry during this interim time. There has been great work done in many different aspects of the congregation. You will read about many of those things in this report.

A few highlights of this year include; living into the revised staffing structure with new staff people on board, completing significant work with the Personnel Committee with respect to ensuring that we follow the UUA guidelines for staff benefits and revising the Personnel Policies, continuing our work living in FPB's mission with particular emphasis paid to the dismantling racism, and supporting the work of the Transition Team and Search Committee during the search for a candidate to be your next settled minister.

We welcomed two new staff persons this year; Alisa Joyce as the Parish Administrator and Laci Adams as the Coordinator of Religious Exploration. We also started with a new position of a contracted bookkeeper. Laci and Alisa quickly became part of the FPB family and are bringing important new skills to our staff team.

Alisa moved our communications including the monthly newsletter, Among Us, Weekly Update and Spiritual Sustenance, onto MailChimp a marketing automation platform. She also worked with Ellie Boynton, Technology Chair, to change the congregational database to Breeze, a Church Management Software.

Laci simultaneously shored up the infrastructure and processes for our Religious Exploration program, while also bringing new energy and ideas to the program. She relieved the RE Committee of unnecessary burdens that they had assumed during last church year while we were without a DRE and were discerning the best staffing structure moving forward.

There has been significant work done this year on issues of social justice and congregational change. The Immigration Justice Committee sustained its commitment to community partner organizations, continued to act for immigration justice in our country and local communities, and collaborated with St. Mary's Episcopal Church and other faith communities and activists to join the Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network.

We worked all year with Dr. Darnisa Amante and Reverend Eric Jackson from the Disruptive Equity Education Project (DEEP) to further the congregational engagement with and commitment to dismantling racism. As well, we cultivated a relationship with Black Lives Matter Boston (BLM) through hosting workshops with Karlene Griffiths Sekou, hosting a BLM sponsored panel including members of Antifa, hosting a BLM fundraiser and promoting their Campaign 21 fundraising campaign to the congregation. In addition, we also supported Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) with a dedicated plate offering and an additional \$2,700 from the \$10 per member campaign.



Worship continued to be a place of solidarity, rejuvenation, spiritual deepening and congregational growth. We had our second year of ministry themes including the month of October focusing on Whiteness. Our services continued to be a blend of the traditional, such as the four communion services, and the contemporary, such as projecting slides during worship at least twice each month.

Perhaps the most important thing that we did this year was to prepare the congregation for the transition to a new minister. The Search Committee worked incredibly hard and brought a candidate, Lisa Perry Wood to the congregation for candidating week which ran from 29<sup>th</sup> – May 6<sup>th</sup>. The Transition Team continued their work in supporting shared leadership discussions and other congregational transition issues. The Transition Team concluded their work at the end of this church year.

This has been an incredibly successful conclusion to our interim ministry.

With love and gratitude for each of you, always,

Rev. Rebecca

### **MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP TEAM REPORT**

The Ministerial Fellowship Team has continued monthly meetings with our interim minister, Rev. Rebecca Bryan, during the 2017-18 church year. Our discussions since January 2018 have pertained to support of Rev. Rebecca during her transition away from this interim ministry and into a new UU ministry.

We submitted a second application for fellowship with the UUA on July 1, 2017 and were informed that Rev. Rebecca had passed that milestone in February 2018 (the UUA Fellowship Committee meets only twice yearly). We will submit a final application on July 1, 2018. Hopefully Rev Rebecca will be in final fellowship with the UUA during her first year of senior ministry.

It has been our pleasure and honor to serve in this capacity.  
Our group will disband after our final meeting in June, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Andrews, Chair  
David Cave, Emily Cherry and Sheila Hussey.

### **TRANSITION TEAM REPORT**

The Transition Team was formed to assist the Interim ministry throughout the interim period between settled ministers (from the departure of Rev Jim Sherblom through the departure of interim minister Rev Rebecca Bryan and welcoming of the new settled minister).

**Members:** Anne Copeland Jami Jordan, Co-Chairs; Mark Reynolds, Bob Williamson, Sue Andrews, Ginger Melton and Rev Rebecca Bryan

**Meetings:** Monthly, with occasional additional special meetings or projects

**Tasks:** The Transition Team is guided by the following Tasks of an Interim Ministry, as outlined by the UUA:

- claiming and honoring its past and engaging and honoring its griefs and conflicts
- recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges
- clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of
- making appropriate use of District, UUA, and other outside resources
- proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

**Activities:** During the 2017-18 church year, the Transition Team:

- Recommended and facilitated discussions among various committees to improve cross-committee understanding.
- Wrote periodic updates of their activities in the church monthly newsletter.
- Encouraged the use of the newly-formulated Shared Leadership model of engagement, wherein leaders of groups within the church could be called together for a specific, focused discussion that would benefit from cross-committee engagement.
- Consulted with the Search Committee about church themes and concerns discerned through Transition Team discussions and surveys.
- Encouraged the process of welcoming a new called minister.
- Provided periodic consultation to Rev Rebecca on interim ministry matters.
- Helped facilitate the acknowledgement and celebration of our interim minister's work.
- Met with the ministerial candidate Lisa Perry-Wood, to share our perspective and help her understand the interim work.
- Maintained a Suggestion Box for people to ask questions or make observations (although this has been rarely used)

The Transition Team anticipates disbanding upon the hiring of a new settled minister, although representatives of the Team will be available to offer perspective and information to the new minister and others, as needed.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anne Copeland and Jami Jordan, Co-Chairs

## **MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Chair:** Ellie Boynton

**Members:** Karla Baehr, Steve Peterson Davis, Susan Larrabee, Laura Walters, and Ron Wilkinson

**Mission Statement:** To find a new Senior Minister for the congregation using the procedures provided by the UUA.

### **Major accomplishments for 2017-2018:**

- Followed the UUA process (see below) for calling a new minister starting in July 2017.
- Presented Lisa Perry-Wood, current Acting Parish Minister at First Parish in Bedford, to the congregation for consideration.
- The congregation called Lisa Perry-Wood to be our Senior Minister with a 93.5% vote on May 6, 2018. [Quorum: 112 members attended the vote (132 originally, some had to leave and cast their votes absentee). The final vote tally was: 140 votes cast, 3 abstentions, 128 voted yes, 9 voted no = 93.5% vote to call Lisa Perry-Wood]

### **A recap of the search process:**

May through early September

- The Parish Board (our governing board) chose the members of the Search Committee based largely on voting by the congregation.
- To ensure a smooth “passing of the torch” of responsibility, we interviewed the Transition Team and Rev. Rebecca to make sure that we were “up to speed” on what they had learned during the first year and a half of our interim ministry about our congregations hopes, dreams and challenges.
- We began our work in late July with a planning retreat led by a facilitator trained by our national organization here in Boston, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

September through December outreach and discernment

- We focused our outreach through a comprehensive congregation-wide survey, interviews with committees and staff, and one-on-one conversations with interested members and friends of the congregation and leaders of partner organizations
- With the Transition Team, we hosted a UUA-sponsored discussion and dialogue on hidden bias, Beyond Categorical Thinking.
- To learn more about who we are as a congregation with a focus on what the congregation values and what we are seeking in a new minister, we sponsored

Ministerial Search Forums open to all—and a Circle Supper; these were structured conversations with one another and Search Committee members about our hopes and dreams.

#### December “translating”

- We “translated” what we learned into a document the UUA calls “The Congregational Record”. The Congregational Record is intended to be an honest and comprehensive picture—using both quantitative and qualitative data—of who we are.
- We submitted the Congregational Record to the UUA to share with prospective candidates, so they could use it to discern whether or not they think their hopes and skills are a good match for First Parish.
- We shared the quantitative results of the fall survey and the themes we had developed for the Congregational Record with the congregation and held two forums in December to share and listen to members’ feedback.

January through March began the confidential part of the process:

- In early January, members of the Search Committee received the names of 26 ministers interested in becoming our next minister. We reviewed online the materials each of them prepared and invited a number of them to interview with us via Zoom.
- Based on those Zoom interviews and a deeper look at their hopes and dreams for ministry, their life and work experiences, sample sermons, and other information they shared and that we received from reference checks, we invited three really promising candidates for intensive, in-person weekend visits when we had in-depth conversations, gave each a tour of First Parish, and saw each one preach at a neutral pulpit.

In March, we completed our discernment, choosing from among these highly accomplished ministers the one whom all of us are confident will be the wonderful best match for First Parish.

#### **Goals for 2018-2019:**

- NA

The Ministerial Search Committee has been disbanded following the call of Lisa Perry-Wood as our Senior Minister.

#### **Thanks to...**

- The whole congregation, for supporting our process, joining us in forums and committee and individual conversations, and participating in the congregational meeting and vote.
- The Parish Board, for support and help with the congregational meeting.

- The Transition Team for all of their work before and during our process.
- Rev. Rebecca for meeting with our Chair frequently and with the whole Committee when needed and helping with all sorts of issues that arose and keeping us on track in the process. Her advice and support was critical to our success.
- Keith Kirchoff for helping to plan and providing critical support to the two Candidating Week services and blessing us with wonderful music all year.
- Alisa Joyce, who was always there to help us with logistics like setting up our separate bank account, so we could reimburse candidates without breaking confidentiality, lots of scheduling, many communications to the congregation, providing data for the Congregational Record, etc. All with the speediest of responses and a positive, professional attitude.
- Laci Adams who eagerly engaged with Candidating Week planning (providing childcare, worship planning, reaching out to RE families to get them involved, and the wonderful Maypole).
- Boateng for setting up all sorts of meetings for our committee and larger groups, including all the meals during Candidating Week.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellie Boynton, Chair

### **REPORT OF THE PARISH BOARD** **Congregational Year 2017-2018**

#### Summary:

This year was a year of transitions, in which the Parish Board, led by Chair Michele David, concluded our interim work with Reverend Rebecca, and supported the Search Committee to find our new settled minister. We supported our congregation in its exploration of racial justice and experienced our own growth working with the multicultural and racial equity consultants from the Disruptive Equity Education Project (DEEP). We supported our staff by refining our personnel policies. We found joy in all of the year's work and look forward to next year!

#### Board members:

Michele David (Chair), James Shillaber (Vice Chair), Alice Mark (Clerk), Ben Davis (Treasurer), David Cave, Dave Demerjian, Laura Hatfield, Charles Sandmel, Gene Thompson-Grove, Rev Rebecca Bryan (ex officio).

#### Brief Report:

For minutes from each board meeting and more details, please see the First Parish in Brookline website ([firstparishinbrookline.org/about/reports](http://firstparishinbrookline.org/about/reports)). Highlights from the year are listed on the following page:

During each of our Parish Board meetings, we had standing reports from Ben Davis and the Finance Committee, which strengthened our commitment to “Mission Based Accounting” as an approach to First Parish’s finances. Ongoing support of the finance committee included support related to canvass, buildings and grounds, budgeting, and personnel policies. Because of our decision to reduce the draw on the endowment last year which resulted in fewer staff, we discussed the effect our reduced personnel has had on the church, its members, staff, and programs. Ben and the Finance Committee have worked hard on creating a budget to present to the congregation this year that again works to live within our mission, balance expenses, and bring our endowment draw to a sustainable level.

Our Personnel and Finance Committees reviewed First Parish’s employee benefits offerings, and the board voted to enhance several benefits to the staff that were in line with or exceeding UUA recommendations. Information about the new benefits became part of a comprehensive revision of the personnel policies that was approved by the board in April.

We voted unanimously to dissolve the Committee on Ministry. In collaboration with the Search Committee with guidance by James Shillaber, we are putting an onboarding plan in place for the called minister.

We voted to meet monthly during the summer, rather than taking the summer off. Especially with the new minister starting, we want to make sure that they have good support as they begin their new ministry.

In a special meeting, we met with DEEP as a board to discuss their work with the congregation and how the Parish Board can support each other and the congregation as we confront our history together and move towards racial justice. We affirmed our commitment to continue this work in the next year and recommend that it be put into our budget to continue.

We voted unanimously to support Black Lives UU by pledging to a \$10 commitment per member from First Parish, amounting to \$2700. Just over \$2400 was generously given by the congregation and the remaining money came from our FY18 budget.

We joyfully supported the Search Committee in their work identifying our next minister and cannot thank them enough for all that they have done.

Next year, Michele David continues as our Chair with Gene Thompson-Grove is our Chair Elect. We say goodbye to James and Ben and welcome new people to the Board.

Respectfully,

Michele David, Chair, First Parish Board

Members: David Cave, Ben Davis, Dave Demerjian, Laura Hatfield, Alice Mark, Gene Thompson-Grove, Charles Sandmel, James Shillaber.

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

The final year of the interim ministry provided an opportunity to think more deeply about our policies and programs as an employer, and to make changes that better align First Parish in Brookline with the UUA guidelines for employment and our own values. James Shillaber was supported by other board members and staff to address the following areas during the 2017-2018 church year.

**Enhancing benefits** – in conjunction with UUA guidelines, FPB will pay the full premium for staff's long-term disability, accidental death and dismemberment and life insurance. In addition, we updated and clarified the amounts we contribute to health and dental insurance premiums, increased the vacation allocation for staff, and introduced new paid parental leave and extended medical leave policies.

**Rewriting the personnel policies** – the new benefits offerings were explained in new personnel policies, which included some other small changes to employment policies. These were approved by the Board April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Writing performance management and compensation guidelines** – the board formalized performance management and compensation guidelines to provide more support for the new Senior Minister and Board in managing and paying staff in the future.

**Supporting the new Senior Minister** – The Personnel Committee worked with the Search Committee, Finance Committee and board on the terms for the contract for the new Senior Minister and developed an onboarding approach that will help the new minister learn more and more quickly about the church, its members and community.

The Personnel Committee especially thanks the Senior Minister, Rev Rebecca Bryan, Parish Administrator, Alisa Joyce, and Treasurer, Ben Davis, for their input, review and counsel during the year.

Respectfully,  
James Shillaber

## **BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Bylaws Committee, with Parish Board approval, has proposed one amendment to our current bylaws.

Currently, the second paragraph of section 8.01 Endowment Funds reads:

“No part of the principal of any endowment fund except the Invested Income Reserve”  
(note: this Reserve Fund is intended only for Building and Grounds purposes)

“may be used except by a 2/3 vote at two membership meetings at least two weeks apart (c.f. 6.01 for quorum requirements). The notices of these meetings must specify the purpose and maximum amount of the proposed expenditure

In other words, when our proposed budget requires a withdrawal from our endowment of more funds than have been earned by investment during the preceding fiscal year, the congregation needs to grant its approval twice, with a quorum of at least 15%.

The proposed amendment, to be voted on at the annual meeting on May 20, 2018 reads:

No part of the principal of any endowment fund except the Invested Income Reserve may be used except by a 2/3 vote at a congregational meeting (c.f. 6.01 for quorum requirements). The notice of this meeting must specify the purpose and maximum amount of the proposed expenditure.

This change makes it possible for the congregation to approve a budget that includes an endowment withdrawal greater than the amount earned (if this is necessary in order to operate the church) without calling two meetings at least two weeks apart. The budget could be approved, as long as we have 15% of the membership present, at annual meeting.

The amendment will be voted on at our Annual Meeting on May 20, 2018. A 2/3 majority of a 15% quorum is required to pass the amendment.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Andrews, chair Bylaws Committee



## **SPACE RENTAL EXPANSION TASK FORCE OF THE PARISH BOARD**

Sara Warren (Chair), Bob Williamson, Adam Wilson (liaison to Finance Committee) and Karla Baehr

We have continued efforts begun last year to respond to the mandate from 70% of the respondents to the fall 2016 all-congregation survey by the Transition Team to increase First Parish space rental as one strategy for closing our financial “sustainability gap” – the gap between a sustainable annual draw from our endowment and our yearly spending on staff, programs and building maintenance.

In the course of our work last year we concluded that our building can be an asset! An education space? A performance space? An incubator for budding cooking businesses? We can share the building with the community in creative ways and reap the benefits if we put our talent, time and treasure into the effort.

We have identified and are pursuing four kinds of rental activity to pursue:

**Rehearsal Space** We are hoping to update our website and launch a process to promote renting the sanctuary as rehearsal, recital and performance space to piano teachers and acoustic ensembles, e.g., early music, new music, string quartets and jazz ensembles. We will promote the refurbished piano and sanctuary acoustics as competitive advantages.

**Commercial Kitchen Space** We are looking to identify and contract with one or more small bakers to use our kitchen on a regular basis, e.g., weekly day use, Saturdays. This use will require working with prospective tenants and the Board of Health to acquire a commercial kitchen license, as well as a one-time expense of approximately \$5,000 to purchase and install more storage and refrigeration capacity.

**Pre-school/Day Care/After School Care Space** shared with our RE Programs Our ultimate hope is to secure a long-term tenant willing to share in the cost of renovating the first and second floors to create a dramatically improved shared RE/Pre School/After School Space. We have asked the Finance Committee to consider a one-time expenditure of \$10,000 to develop design options and cost estimates for renovation to share with prospective tenants.

In the short term, we remain open to a short-term tenant who will share first floor space “as is” potentially with access to playground and to Pierce Hall. This will require modest playground and ground floor modifications to meet licensing requirements. We anticipate paying the estimated \$10,000 cost of these modifications with a portion of the estimated first-year rent of \$25,000-30,000.

**Expanded Existing Use** We are researching current rental rates for one-time use and current leased tenants; we believe it may be appropriate to raise them to market rate. We hope to expand the space used by existing tenants by making modest improvements and accommodations. For example, air conditioning Dana at an estimated cost of \$4,000

would likely pay for itself within one or two years as it would become much more attractive as training space, June – September.

**Next Steps** This initiative takes time and effort – and is critical to the long-term health of our congregation. We welcome your support. If you'd like to find out more and/or help in some way, please let us know of your interest!

### **AFFILIATE MINISTER REV. ELIZA BLANCHARD'S REPORT**

#### **Animal Care Ministry: May 2017 to May 2018**

My various ministries slow down over the summer, though my reading and research do not. On August 27th I offered a Blessing of the Animals summer service in Lyon Chapel: while we bless our beloved companions at this time, we also hold up those fellow animals who've passed away - a bittersweet time.

The fall was busy with spiritual direction, pulpit supply, and the first Pet Loss Healing Circle of the church year. That September 17th offering was attended by people who - quite by coincidence- had all lost their beloveds suddenly. The mutual understanding offered was much appreciated, and people left feeling a little less lonely.

I preached here at FPB on November 26th, which is always a gift. On December 3rd, I offered a Blue Holidays-type Pet Loss Circle, well attended. It's a hard time for many of us, as we take time to notice who's missing from our holiday. I preached again on March 4th, as Rev. Rebecca began her search, and offered the final Pet Loss Healing Circle at FPB on March 25th. It was very well attended: I've been told again and again that there are few other places in the area in which to get support for pet loss.

In April I offered Animal Blessing services at a variety of churches, and in Franklin I preached on the seventh principle in the morning and offered a pet loss workshop in the afternoon.

Over the fall and winter, I helped a number of people referred to me from beyond our congregation: your support affects many beyond our walls. As always, I am so grateful for this congregation and my colleague's support of this ministry.

## **COMMUNITY MINISTER REV. MARYHELEN GUNN'S REPORT**

### **Annual Report of CampUUsBoston, First Parish in Brookline**

Submitted By: Rev. MaryHelen Gunn, Affiliate Minister for Campus Ministries and UU Spiritual Advisor, Northeastern University

**Executive summary/TLDR:** Four years of investment in campus partnership with Northeastern University are currently under threat from funding and institutional uncertainty, even as the moral and strategic call to strengthen UU ties to campus community has never been stronger.

### **The state of CampUUsBoston's ministry in 8 Principles:**

1. *Every person:* For our UU student group at Northeastern University, AY2017-18 was a waning year - right on schedule. On the heels of a strong year in AY2016-17 - three leading seniors graduated in June 2017, and a fourth graduate in December - our weekly UU group's levels of engagement, energy and participation lagged especially in the second semester of this year. This is in keeping with standard flux cycles in campus ministry. Based on my participation in collegial communities online (ACURA and NACUC) and around Boston, it's fair to say that the field of campus ministry itself is changing; particularly in non-evangelical Protestant denominations, engagement in non-evangelical religious affinity groups on campus is down across the board, reflecting decades-long trends in the broader US population.
2. *Treated Fairly:* My role as Spiritual Advisor at Northeastern University is an annually renewable 10-month contract position. Budget uncertainties stemming from possible changes in international student enrollment may affect AY2017-18 staffing in the Center for Spirituality, Dialogue and Service where I serve. I have been assured that my status as Spiritual Advisor is safe been though funding is not assured; most of NEU's 23 Spiritual Advisors are compensated by off-campus/outside religious organizations.
3. *Learning Together:* Because campuses have legal (see suicide article below) and policy-level obligations to protect student privacy, the ONLY path for outside religious groups to move in these spaces is through long-term development of institutional mutual trust and officially sanctioned relationships. The prerequisite for THAT is having a student group that is officially recognized on campus (see #1)
4. *Seeking Truth:* Unitarian Universalists interested in continuing engagement and building outreach to higher-education populations are investing in new initiatives in campus partnerships (see links below.)
5. *Using Our Voices:* For AY2018-19, two younger adults and I are beginning to envision ways to advance this campus ministry even in the face of funding uncertainties. One is Jessica Henderson, a 2018 alum of our NEU student group who has also taught RE at FPB; the other is Emily Cherry, a young adult member of FPB. We welcome partners to the table!

6. *For Peace and Justice*: Take a browse through our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NUUUs/>) to glean stories of what our UU student group has been up to, going back as far as 2014.
7. *On our shared earth*: Boston is home to approximately 125,000 students from around the world. Some share UU values broadly speaking; plenty do not. Most have never heard of Unitarian Universalism. While they are here to study, learn, and build their adult selves - and as they orient their lives toward staying in Boston, as more and more graduates strive to do - UU investment in building relationships and showing them who we are through longterm campus partnerships is a win-win-win-win.
8. *In Beloved Community*: There is a growing sense that liberal religious groups face the greatest likelihood of success in promoting liberal religious values in the campus context by leading initiatives - and partnering with, for example, campus cultural centers such as Northeastern's African-American student center or the Latinx center or the office for LGBTQ students - to advance, amplify, and support those working toward the VALUES we wish to promote, as a priority higher than (though not exclusive of) any particular liberal religious identity (see #4).

Relevant UUA Blog posts:

1. <https://www.uua.org/blueboat/young-adults/why-do-engaged-uu-youth-become-untethered-young-adults>
2. <https://faithify.org/archived-projects/help-undocumented-students-achieve-their-dreams/>

Relevant stories about challenges students face on campuses in Boston and around the country:

1. <http://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2018/05/15/students-parents-university-suicide>
2. <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>
3. <https://www.aauw.org/resource/campus-sexual-assault-tool-kit/>
4. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/12/us/college-students-free-speech.html> - and - <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/645/transcript>

For a wider context of this ministry, browse online writings of Umair Haque, whose commentaries illuminate the long-building challenges to democracy and even civilization that today's young adults are living into.

## **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Report to First Parish in Brookline Annual Meeting May 2018

Buildings and Grounds supports the church with planning and capital projects. Our budget complements the Maintenance budget to allow our physical plant to serve our religious community. We very much appreciate the way our church administrator Alisa Joyce – ably supported by custodians Boateng and Oppong Serebour – work together with us in this goal.

### **The year in review**

Capital projects since the last Annual Report along with the Committee Members who helped supervise them:

- Repointing and reinforcement of the southwest buttress and the remaining top half of the northwest buttress of the Sanctuary tower (\$22,835) – Clint

We have met with the Safety Committee especially around safe access to the Sanctuary from the parking area and expect to work with them to address short- and long-term solutions.

This past fiscal year, the annual B&G funding from the endowment was \$40,000. Note that Buildings and Grounds is funded by a dedicated reserve account. Our spending in any given year may be more or less than our endowment transfer. The account may be supplemented by grants and special donations. We always maintain a minimum amount for unexpected expenditures.

We continue to monitor the Tower. We remain committed to restoring the entire tower as soon as possible to address structural and envelope integrity issues. Funding for this remains an open issue but could be assisted by a capital campaign.

For many years, we have been members of Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light, an education and advocacy group, which also provides us with advice on green projects as needed.

### **Upcoming projects**

We are guided by a 20-year maintenance plan that allocates costs for specific items on a yearly basis. We also continue to address our deferred maintenance, new safety issues, and accessibility and green projects. Our near-term projects include:

- Heat pump for the Dana Room (c. \$6000) - This will provide air conditioning and lead to increased rentals - Clint and Adam Wilson
- Reinforcing the northwest side of the Sanctuary floor (c. \$15,000) - Sam
- More Tower masonry projects (\$20,000+) – Clint

The 2019 fiscal year B&G funding remains at the reduced level of \$40 thousand.

## **Major capital projects**

In addition to the long-term maintenance plan, the Building and Grounds Committee has identified building improvement initiatives beyond B&G's scheduled maintenance purview and budget. These were put forward as potential projects for consideration if a capital campaign were undertaken. A visioning session was held with the various Committee Chairs in October, 2013 at which the following improvement concepts were presented:

1. Improve the accessibility and safety of the sanctuary entrance
2. Improve the outdoor areas to be part of the spiritual and social life of the Church
3. Make "green" sustainability improvements that lessen our carbon footprint such as solar electricity
4. Be good stewards of the building by repairing the Tower
5. Create more classrooms and accessible toilet rooms in the ground floor of Parish Hall
6. Renovate Pierce Hall to better meet the multifunctional space needs of the Church
7. Renovate the Sanctuary to improve worship experience

As always, we rely on our members and seek additional volunteers for initiating projects. Join us and help achieve our vision of making this place truly welcoming and environmentally sustainable.

Respectfully submitted by the Building and Grounds Committee,

Clint Richmond, Chair

Tim Dailey

Sam Dennis

Will Spears

## **BUILDING OPERATIONS REPORT**

### **2017-2018**

*Building Operations, according to the budgeted line items, encompasses overseeing the recurring daily operating expenses incurred throughout the year: from insurance to ground maintenance, fuel oil, snow removal, utilities and unplanned repairs.*

Unplanned and unexpected are perfect words to describe my first experience with Building Operations here at First Parish in Brookline. As you know, I began in August, so have not yet experienced a full year of surprises. One of my first experiences working with Building Operations came when I called our handyman to fix a recurring leak in the Skylight Room, which became our Nursery by September. I learned that, yet again, turkeys had gnawed their way through the roofing, the patchwork, and the rubber covering that had already been placed upon the roof over the Skylight Room! That was fixed twice again and, now, the leak has stopped. A few months later, it seemed the turkeys had gotten to the roof over the kitchen stove, and another part of the roof had to be patched up! This is something I never expected but am now aware of and will keep an eye on going forward.

We had several heating issues this winter, which we finally seemed to resolve by mid-March. Because of the issues, we created new documents addressing how staff and volunteers can reset the boilers, bleed the radiators, and do other simple things to keep the heat running a little more smoothly here. We anticipate these will all come in handy this upcoming winter.

A larger issue that was really brought to light this year was the freezing over of the upper parking lot outside the Sanctuary. Thankfully, our newly formed Safety Task Force has taken that on, while our custodian, Boateng “Kofi” Serebour spent extra time salting and sanding, and we gave new directives to our snow removal contractor.

Boateng has been instrumental in the transition of Parish Administrators, has kept things running smoothly and always kept an even disposition amidst the challenges we faced. He has let me know what needs to be done on several occasions, while maintaining the building as a safe and clean environment for all of you. Boateng does the bulk of the maintenance work inside the building, all the set ups and clean ups for special events and is always willing to go above and beyond for our community.

Oppong Serebour, Boateng’s brother, who is equally hard-working and dedicated, is with us on Sunday afternoons to help with hospitality, cleanup, and any additional set ups that are needed.

We maintained long-term building rentals, created a few new partnerships, and hosted special events here at First Parish in Brookline. We celebrated and mourned lives of loved ones, we hosted trainings, and threw parties. And we helped with all of these things as a caring, committed staff devoted to sharing radical hospitality within this beautiful, old, stone church.

I am very grateful for the many ways Rev. Rebecca stepped in and helped with problem solving when things got overwhelming, and for the exceptional team work both Rev. Rebecca and Boateng.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Alisa Joyce, Parish Administrator*

## **CANVASS (ANNUAL PLEDGE CAMPAIGN) TEAM REPORT**

Co-chairs: Clare Reilly and Melinda Maryniuk

Other participants: Bob Williamson, Laura Hatfield (for Parish Board), Rev. Rebecca, Alisa Joyce

This year's Annual Financial Commitment Campaign launched with an aggressive campaign goal of \$450,000. We felt this was a realistic increase from what was raised last year (\$430,000). Our theme was "We are the Church" – to emphasize, that even in this time of transition as we anticipated a new minister – it is the people of First Parish that make this church a beloved community.

As of today – we have **\$425,595** in pledges; we anticipate we can reach **\$430,000** by the end of the church year.

**Activities:** The official kick-off Sunday was March 4. A "Canvass Express" table was hosted at hospitality for four consecutive Sundays. Given the success of last year's campaign, we followed a similar format including:

- Inviting members to give testimonials during the month of March
- Offering many options for making a pledge (filling out a form, using the website links or just sending an email!)
- making personal visits and connections with over 30 member to express appreciation for gifts
- making ourselves available to discuss the process and answer questions
- holding a joint business meeting with the finance committee during the month of March to be transparent about budget, funds needed, etc.

### **A few facts:**

- **199 pledging units** – This is the total number of members and friends who received the kick-off Canvass mailing and follow up emails. (This number has remained about the same over the past 8 years that we have data).
  - At the end of the official pledge drive month – we heard from 95 pledging units (48%), with pledges totaling \$326,415 (77% of the current total). Clearly, continuing the pledge drive through the month of April is important in reaching our goal!
- **144 pledging units responding (as of today).** (91 are couples/2 adult households; 53 are single or single parent families). Of this total,
  - 73 (51%) increased
  - 23 (16%) decreased
  - 35 (24%) stayed the same
  - 13 (9%) new pledges, or "new" because they did not pledge last year
- **\$2,951 average pledge amount:**
  - From "couple" pledging units – \$3,670
  - From "single" pledging units – \$1,380
  - From new pledges (did not pledge previous year) - \$540



- Average pledge from “singles” -
- Of the 55 remaining members and friends we contacted approximately,
  - 15 have reasons they will not be pledging this year (moving, found new church, etc.)
  - 25 also did not pledge last year, so we will likely take them off next year’s list
  - 15 pledged last year but we’ve been unable to determine if they will pledge this year

Special thanks to:

- Alfred Brownell, Ben Davis and Prilla Smith Brackett who all shared testimonials during the month of March.
- The Parish and Finance Committees for their support.
- Karla Baehr’s excellent notes and guidance from last year’s campaign
- Laura Hatfield for her help with data, especially at the budget meeting.
- Ellie Boynton for her help with updating the pledge section of the website.
- Rev. Rebecca for her support throughout the process
- Everyone who made their contributions!

Considerations for next year:

- 1) Make personal visits / connections with all individuals pledging for the first time.
- 2) Trim the mailing list to remove names of people who have not given in more than two years.

Submitted with gratitude and appreciation for this community,

Melinda Maryniuk, Clare Reilly and Bob Williamson

May 16, 2018

## **CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **BOOK CLUB 2017-2018**

The First Parish Book Club offered a particularly eclectic selection of books during the past year: laugh-out-loud political satire, fantasy, traditional novels, mystery embedded in historical fiction, memoir, and more! Our discussions are always lively as we share and develop thoughts, insights, and reactions to works of fiction and non-fiction alike. We continue to sample tasty, theme-related baked goods provided by Ruderman Bakers, a tempting incentive to join us!

Our reading list for the year:

- *The Sellout* – Paul Beatty
- *Homegoing* – Yaa Gyasi
- *Lincoln in the Bardo* – George Saunders
- *Mister Monkey* – Francine Prose
- *The Good Lord Bird* – James McBride
- *Plainsong* – Kent Haruf
- *Daring Democracy* – Frances Moore Lappe & Adam Eichen (UUA Common Read)
- *Death Comes to the Archbishop* – Willa Cather
- *A Gentleman in Moscow* – Amor Towles
- *Golden Hill: A Novel of Old New York* – Francis Spufford
- *When Breath Becomes Air* – Paul Kalanithi

The Book Club generally meets the first Sunday of every month. We advertise our meetings dates and book selections in the weekly bulletins, orders of service announcements, and monthly newsletters. Join us if a book we've chosen appeals to you – there's no long-term commitment required! If you've enjoyed a book and would like to discuss it with a group, let us know the title, and we'll put it on our list. Contact Julie Horvath (jrhovath123@gmail.com) if you'd like to be added to our mailing list.

### **POETRY CIRCLE REPORT**

The Poetry Circle meets every second Monday at 4pm, often extending our discussion to 6pm. We are a reading/appreciation group, not a writers' group, although some of us do write the occasional poem. This year ends the group's ninth year at First Parish. Our attendance varies in number, and we maintain a healthy list of those who have attended as well as brand new attendees.

This group is open to anyone who enjoys poetry, or who would like to be exposed to and explore the work of poets from a variety of times and places.

This year we have discussed the works of :

Carol Ann Duffy- Canada

Lisel Mueller-Germany

The Psalms

Wendell Berry-American  
Gerard Manly Hopkins- 19<sup>th</sup> century British  
Sherman Alexie- native American  
Gabriela Mistral-Chile  
Nikki Giovanni- African American  
Thomas Wyatt- 16<sup>th</sup> century British  
and for May- Rita Dove- 20th century African American

Submitted by Sue Andrews

### **VESPERS REPORT**

**Leaders:** Jamie Redgrave and Anne Copeland, with all regular attendees sharing in leadership of services

**Participation:** Approximately 6-8 people attend each Vespers Service.

**Description:** On the second Sunday of each month (5-6pm or, seasonally, 7-8pm), an opportunity for a small, contemplative lay-led vespers service has been offered to the First Parish community. Based on the ages-old practice of marking the end of the day with communal reflection, this service revolves around simple music, guided meditation, and periods of silence and quiet reflection focused on a unifying theme. In a candle-lighting ritual, attendees are invited to name those who are physically absent but, on their minds, and in their hearts. Most services this year included a co-leader from the group, who chose the theme and readings and helped run the service. Themes in 2017-18 paralleled the monthly church themes (e.g., Invitation, Whiteness, Harvest, Anticipation, Courage, Surrender, Generosity, Hope, and Reconciliation).

### **MEN'S GATHERING REPORT**

A men's gathering is in the process of formation. Rather than define ourselves by a formal agenda or a charter, we seek to be an open group where anyone who identifies as a man and as a member of the First Parish community is welcome. We hope to curate a number of experiences as demand for them becomes apparent. Ideas brought forward so far include

- Service to the congregation
- Providing hospitality
- Discussion/spirituality groups
- Social events and outings

So far we have held two communal drop-in breakfasts, begun to restore the upper parking lot, agreed to support the end-of-year celebration, and planned a hike. Watch the church bulletin for announcements.

### **CONGREGATIONAL LIFE EVENTS**

#### **Child Dedications**

- May 2018                      Kolbi Lopez Broadhurst

#### **Graduating High School Seniors June 2018**

- Kathryn Wood
- Tim Weighart
- Grace Zaborski

#### **Memorials / Life Celebrations**

- September 2017              Gerard Alain Vilaire
- January 2018                Ingrid Willers

#### **Calling of New Settled Minister**

- May 2018                      Lisa Perry-Wood

### **DEACONS' REPORT** **2017-2018**

**Members:** Bill Dwyer, Sheila Hussey, Laura Walters, Midge Wilcke, Ray Wellbaum, Bob Williamson and Jim Womack

**Purpose:** The Deacons, approved by the Parish Board, are the designated elders of the parish. They act as the institutional memory of the church and support the wellbeing of the congregation by being a strong presence in institutional life.

During the year the Deacons met several times with Reverend Rebecca Bryan to share our institutional memory and provide support as she successfully completed her interim ministry with us. We look forward to providing equally steadfast care to our new minister beginning August 1. We continue to serve as ushers at memorial services and other church events as appropriate.

We assist our minister in the celebration of four communion services during the church year. This long tradition at First Parish speaks to some of us.

Reverend Jan K. Nielson of the Universalist Church of West Hartford speaks for many of us in a homily-addressing communion as we celebrate it in our sanctuary. She describes it as having three central meanings for Unitarian Universalists: thanksgiving, remembrance and commitment. She also recognizes that disagreements over communion have divided congregations but refers to the writings of early Universalists who “held to the belief that no difference of mind should ever interrupt the flow of love to one another.” Every seeker on life’s journey comes to recognize that his or her body and soul require particular nourishment. Some find the words of First Parish’s communion service move us to memories of childhood teachings, or a call to the best within us, or a recognition of all that we have to be thankful for as members of a faith community. Some of the service reads:

*The twin demands of love and mercy cry across the centuries to those who would follow in Jesus’ footsteps.*

*Communion is not merely a memorial to Jesus’ last hours, but a call to gratitude, thanksgiving, commitment, and community.*

*Duty cannot bring you to this table, nor fear, nor conformity, for this table is everywhere spread in God’s love. Let all come in humility but not in self-abasement, come to remember and praise not just for ceremony, but to find communion with Jesus however we may be given to experience and understand him. Come with your belief and unbelief, for faith is deeper than belief, communion higher than unbelief.*

As Deacons we recognize the multitude of ways hearts and souls seek and find guidance on this life’s journey. We commit to honoring and supporting all who come to our beloved congregation as needs are identified. As called we will serve.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sheila Hussey.

### **DIGITAL MINISTRY TEAM**

FPB continues our commitment to expanding our ministry through social media and other forms of digital ministry.

We have continued to use our First Parish Facebook page to promote events, advertise our worship services, post links to sermons and videos from worship, engage the larger community in our social justice work and partnerships and enjoy inspirational messages including Rev Rebecca’s weekly Spiritual Sustenance. We still hope to cross the 500 friends threshold soon, and are up to 494 currently.

The church continued to see increased usage this year. We used the website to highlight upcoming events and added a link to racial justice activities happening in the community. The information for the weekly events comes from the newsletter and weekly church

email. The information for the racial justice activities is provided each week by the Racial Justice Action Committee.

We continued using Signal app and promoted its use and gave instructions on how it is to be used during coffee hour. This app is used to connect members when we are at social justice events including the Women's March.

This year, we continued having slides for worship projected during the services. Slides include words to responsive readings, and hymns as well as powerful images that accompany many of the liturgical elements. This was done primarily by Scott Ullrich. It has received very positive feedback from members. We also recorded a number of services and sermons that were posted on our new YouTube Page (First Parish in Brookline) and successfully had Rev. Rebecca and the Louis D. Brown Walk for Peace marchers Skype in during worship.

Respectfully Submitted

Scott Ullrich, Ellie Boynton, Rev. Rebecca Bryan, and Alisa Joyce

### **RACIAL JUSTICE ACTION COMMITTEE (RJAC) REPORT**

**Members:** Karla Baehr, Ellen Blaney, Alfred Brownell, Almas Dossa, Madeline Fine, Ann Gilmore, Robson Goulart, Kathryn Kirchner, Martha Leader, Lilly Marcelin, Gene Thompson-Grove, Ron Wilkinson

#### **Mission**

To empower First Parish in Brookline to nourish and be nourished by the rich diversity of people with whom we are all blessed in the congregation, in greater Boston, and the wider world. *(The RJAC plans to rework its mission to reflect more emphasis on racial equity and racial justice.)*

#### **Vision**

We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the interdependent web of which we are all a part. Therefore, we aspire to become an inclusive community, where people can show up as their whole selves to be together in authentic ways. We reaffirm our commitment to our journey as a congregation to become an intentionally anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multi-cultural, beloved community.

*(The RJAC plans to rework its vision to reflect more emphasis on racial equity and racial justice.)*

The **Racial Justice Action Committee (RJAC)** strives to be an open and inclusive group. All are welcome to join. Anyone interested is invited to share your hopes and intentions through a simple exchange that ensures mutual understanding and commitment. We are a covenantal group where people make themselves vulnerable and learning builds as conversations deepen over time through regular participation.

## **Our Name Change**

The Diversity Caucus, which has been in existence at FPB since 2010, has changed its name in 2018 to the **Racial Justice Action Committee** to more clearly and accurately reflect our purpose, our focus and our work.

**History:** In 2009, after a courageous, long-time member of color at FPB shared some of her painful, unwelcoming experiences in our predominantly white community, the congregation passed a resolution to focus on becoming a more welcoming, multi-cultural community. In response, in the spring of 2010, the Committee on Ministry selected six FPB members to form a “Diversity Team” to engage the congregation in that process. About a year later, members of the group changed our name from the “Diversity Team” to the “Diversity Caucus.” “Caucus” is an indigenous, Algonquin word which means, “lifting all the voices.” Caucus members adopted that name change because we aspired to an inclusive, discussion-based, consensus-seeking process.

For the first several years, the membership on the Diversity Caucus was closed in order to build trust and accountability among Caucus members and to maintain a safe space to talk about sensitive issues of race. Thereafter, each spring, the Caucus has extended an invitation to the congregation for interested members to join us, with the understanding that a shared commitment to systemic change requires a level of sensitivity and a sustained engagement.

Over the years, we have provided opportunities for congregational engagement in exploring experiences and attitudes about race and other intersecting forms of marginalization through worship services, movie nights, book discussions and workshops. In the spring of 2013, we organized a two-day workshop in Critical Cultural Competence attended by 50 members, representing 20- 25% of our active membership. At the annual meeting in May of 2013, we proposed and the congregation adopted a resolution that added “anti-racist” to “multi-cultural community” - “We aspire to become a community that is an inclusive place where people can show up as their whole selves and be together in authentic ways. Racism is a barrier to that. Therefore, we reaffirm our commitment to continue our journey in becoming an intentionally, anti-racist, multicultural, beloved community.”

In the past several years, we have become more aware of racism’s deep roots in our history, our culture, our institutions, our relationships, and in our psyches. (The four “I’s” of racism- ideological, institutional, inter-personal and internal). Along with many other congregations in the UUA, we have begun to examine the ways that white supremacy culture is embedded in our own denomination and congregations. We have established relationships with local organizations that are composed of and led by people of color.

Our decision to change our name to the “Racial Justice Action Committee” reflects our growing awareness of the critical importance of centering racial justice in our journey

towards beloved community. We recognize that there are many other ways in which people are marginalized, including class, gender, age, ableism, sexual orientation, and gender expression, and that these characteristics intersect with one another in complicated ways. We also recognize that the word “action” applies to transformations within any of the spheres within which racism operates, including the four “I’s.

## **Overall Goals**

Just as First Parish in Brookline became a GLBT+ Welcoming Congregation, the congregation has embarked on a journey to become a Multicultural, Anti-Racist Beloved Community. Our general goals are as follows:

- ❖ Have in place a long-term “landing place” at First Parish that is actively working to be inclusive and anti-racist, and that includes a critical mass of people of color.
- ❖ Help each other celebrate the richness of experience, deep appreciation of life, beloved relationships, and on-going advancement of justice that we discover, co-create, and share as we travel together on this sacred journey.
- ❖ Be a space for safe reflection.
- ❖ Support the congregation of First Parish in Brookline as it undergoes transformation and moves forward together.
- ❖ Work with others in the congregation to dismantle racial inequality where it exists at First Parish in Brookline and in the larger community.
- ❖ Support people as they struggle with fear, backlash and being stuck.

## **2017-2018 Goals and Actions**

**Goal One:** *Create a mechanism to invite and involve congregation members in Black Lives Matter-related activism, along with a stream of other activities and opportunities related to racial justice and equity; use media and social networking to engage and inform FPB congregation members (continuation from 2016-2017)*

- Developed a web link on the FPB web site that provides information on Racial and Immigration Justice “Take Action” events  
<http://firstparishinbrookline.org/social-action/racial-and-immigration-justice/>
- Worked with a FPB member to utilize the Signal app that allows FPB members to connect with others around specific actions related to social action and racial justice
- Continuing relationship with Black Lives Matter Boston:
  - Embodying Equity – April 27, 2108 BLM Fundraiser
  - Campaign 21
- Continued participation with the "Black Lives Matter" Certified Working Group (CWG) through UU Mass Action, consisting of congregants from several UU churches, which fosters networking among UU congregations to share experiences going forward and to reach out to more potential allies in our local communities



**Goal Two:** *Sponsor racial equity learning experiences for FPB members*

- Disruptive Equity Education Project (DDEP) – supported the consultants who facilitated the six workshops (three sessions offered twice between November and April), RJAC members participated on the DEEP Leadership Team to plan with the DEEP consultants and to debrief the learning, and offered small group continuing conversation sessions between Workshops I and II
- RJAC representatives participated in planning the services during October (theme: Whiteness)

**Goal Three:** *Continue community partnerships (formal and on-going) with current partners, including (but not limited to): SURJ, Jobs not Jails, the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, Centro Presente, the Chelsea Collaborative, and Boston New Sanctuary, Brookline Racial Justice and Equity, etc.*

- Participated in the Las Posadas Celebration at the Chelsea Collaborative in December 2017
- Participated in the Louis D. Brown Mother's Day Peace Walk
- Had RJAC member representation at BLUU meeting in New Orleans and the MOSAIC Conference in San Diego.
- To extend our efforts and live more fully into our commitment for racial justice and equity, we also took action in our local communities (list not all inclusive)
  - Participated in State House actions focused on legislative reform related to dismantling mass incarceration, immigration justice and racial equity
  - Participated in the successful effort for Brookline to join the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Initiative in Brookline. GARE is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all and is a joint project of the new Race Forward and the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>
  - Participated in the Brookline Racial Justice and Equity (BRJE) group - a community organization committed to and focused on equity and racial justice in the Public Schools of Brookline.
  - Participated in the Committee to Rename the Edward Devotion School, as well as hosting the committee's meetings at FPB. Devotion, a K-8 school that is part of the Public Schools of Brookline, was named for Edward Devotion, a slaveholder who lived in Brookline in the late 1600's-mid 1700's (and who was one of the approximately 28% of residents who were slave-holders).

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

Music Director: Keith Kirchoff, 2010-present

**The Choirs:** We had a very busy musical year this year, with exciting music nearly every Sunday! Both the Chancel and Chamber Choirs sang regularly, we welcomed several guest musicians, and the Children's Choir made two appearances.

Chancel Choir – The Chancel Choir consists of roughly 16-30 singers. All are volunteers with the exception of four paid section leaders. The choir welcomed many new members this year. All singers are welcome to join, and no prior experience is required. The choir, led by myself, Keith Kirchoff, continued to sing a varied repertoire of gospel, spirituals, ancient classical, modern classical, rock, folk, pop, Indian, African, Czech, and plainchant among other styles.

Chamber Choir – The only audition-only choir at First Parish, the Chamber Choir consists of a rotating roster of eight singers. Often singing difficult and challenging repertoire, these singers must be strong sight readers. The Chamber Choir sang on average once a month.

**Section Leaders:** The choir pays four section leaders. At the beginning of the year, we invited all of last year's section leaders to return, and three of the four accepted. We welcomed back soprano Elizabeth McIntire, alto JoAnna Pope, tenor Adrian Jones; and baritone Joshua Dixon.

**Assistants:** Adrian Jones led choir rehearsals in my absence, and we welcomed three different piano accompanists to fill in on Sunday mornings: Brian Friedland, Miranda Li, and Tony Ni Evans.

**Christmas:** Christmas this past year was quite traditional, offering a Capella arrangement of classic carols. All agreed it was one of the more successful musical years, guided by the fact that we started preparing early and had comparatively (to other years) familiar music.

**Easter:** At Easter, the Chancel Choir explored Easter music from different black cultures: African-American gospel (with an arrangement of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*), Haitian, and South African. Landon Rose, Brian Friedland, Matthew Lawrence, Jon Hazilla, and Djems Domerson all joined us in the band.

**Piano Rebuilding:** Over the summer, an anonymous donor offered \$25,000 to rebuild our 1916 Steinway A. George Crawford from Aardvark Piano Restorations in Hyde Park refinished the case, and Mark Whitlock rebuilt the action. The process took several more months than quoted, and we debuted the new piano at Thanksgiving.

The piano had extensive work done on it: new strings, new action parts, new pin block, new soundboard. The keys, plate, and case remain original. The piano continues to get broken in but is sounding beautiful.

To celebrate, we launched a short series of three concerts in the Spring: baritone James Dargan (with pianist Mark Whitlock) kicked us off with a program exploring Black composers and artists, pianist Brian Friedland performed in May with a program of original jazz compositions, and I performed in June with a program of works for piano and

electronics.

**Organ Update:** In February, we had Jonathan Ortloff survey our organ, giving us a full report on its current status and needs. The update was unequivocally grim, as we learned both that the previous rebuilding was never finished and much of the finished work was poorly executed. Several pipes were never installed and are now severely damaged, much of the tuning mechanism was never replaced, pipes don't properly fit in their cabinets and have been held on by twine, pvc, and duct tape. The most fragile pipes were placed next to a ladder and have been repeatedly kicked and broken. The blower is too small for the organ lacking a proper ventilation system, which has led to dust and debris from the tower entering the pipes themselves causing damage and erosion. Additionally, it was suggested that the organ was simply too big for the space.

To properly fix the organ, Mr. Ortloff recommended a full rebuild costing several thousand dollars, which is clearly not something we can do at this time.

We have also explored the option of selling the organ and have discovered that it would return at best pennies on the dollar, and at worst actually cost us several thousand. Though we are unable to fully rebuild the organ presently, I personally recommend that we keep it as is, as removing it would deny future generations the option of having an organ at all (to buy our current instrument new would cost several million dollars).

At present, the church has no line item in the budget for the organ. What organ repairs we do every year (primarily in advance of the Christmas service) are via private donation. The organ is played roughly every other service, primarily on traditional hymns.

**Increased Role in Service:** With this being Rev. Rebecca's final year of her interim ministry, I saw my role in service increased. Through February and while Rev. Rebecca was away for her pre-candidating weekends, I was writing and delivering prayers, offering words of welcome, and being the primary point person for worship services and guest ministers.

**Audio Visual & Multimedia:** I have been overseeing the tech during services, and Scott Ulrich has again been an incredible help and asset. The congregation is uniformly grateful for Scott's amazing efforts and volunteerism and have come to love the inclusion of slides in worship.

In the fall, we tried to launch a "tech team" that would help with slides, and audio and video record the services. Unfortunately, despite an initial interest of several folks, the team never really materialized and most of the work has remained with Scott and myself. Marco Vierra video-recording services for roughly two months, and then his family found an alternate church home. Both Jeff Cadow and Matthew Lawrence have helped record occasionally as well, and Bart Bracken would help run the slides on weeks Scott could not attend.

The Board has suggested we hire someone to design, assemble, and run slides each Sunday, and I heartily back this suggestion for next church year

-Keith Kirchoff

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

This year the Nominating Committee has been comprised of:

Sue Andrews, the immediate past Board chair;  
Alice Mark, a current Board member;  
Melinda Maryniuk, member at large elected May 8, 2017 for a 2 year term;  
Laura Walters, member at large elected May 8, 2017 for a 2 year term.

We convened in late February to discuss possible candidates for open leadership positions at First Parish. We also solicited self-nominations. The positions open this year follow, with the names of those this committee nominates for each position.

Treasurer: Charles Sandmel  
Parish Board: Janet Britcher  
                  Michele David  
                  Steve Pratt-Otto

(Note: Michele David's current term on the Board ends June 30. She has agreed to stay on as chair for 2018-19 during our called minister's first year of service. Our bylaws require that she be re-elected at this annual meeting).

Nominating Committee member at large: Ray Wellbaum

Alice Mark will continue as Clerk until June 30, 2019.

Bob Williamson will continue as Moderator.

Katherine Chaurette will continue as alternate Moderator.

(Note: Moderator and alternate Moderator do not have prescribed term limits).

Submitted by Sue Andrews for the committee

## **PARISH ADMINISTRATION**

Transition is the word Sonya Abbott, our previous Parish Administrator, used to begin last year's report. It seems completely fitting that I stick with that word. As you know, the staff model here has changed. We went from Parish Administrator, Administrative Assistant, and Membership Coordinator to Parish Administrator and Bookkeeper. One month after this fiscal year began, I started as your incoming Parish Administrator. Sonya and I cross-trained for about a month before she retired in September. Adam Berman came on board one week after me as our part-time Bookkeeper. Adam tracks our income and spending and keeps our accounts balanced. I work with him on tracking pledges, reconciling bank statements and credit card statements, and financial reports.

As you know, the transition did not end there. We changed the way we send out weekly emails and newsletters to Mail Chimp. This allows us to more easily integrate multimedia and format things in fun, new ways. We switched from listservs to Google Groups for the Board, Committees, and Teams email communications. We also began a new tri-fold format for the weekly Orders of Service and leased a beautiful, functional new Toshiba that prints, copies, and scans. Not to mention the changeover of our old database to a new cloud-based database that can be accessed from anywhere. We are still working out some of the kinks with the database, but it is my goal to have it fully functional and running smoothly by the start of the busy season in September. And, one of the best new improvements, are the updates and upgrades to our Personnel Policies, thanks to the hard work of James Shillaber. And, I keep remembering more and more new things happening, thanks to our diligent photo directory team, Karla Baehr, Eleanor Clarkson, and Madeline Fine, we will have a new church Photo Directory sometime this Summer!

With all of this newness and transition, it is no wonder that there is still some catching up to do at the end of this fiscal year. With the blessing of the Finance Committee, we have hired an incredibly capable and efficient temporary, part-time Office Administrator, Lisa Glaser, who began with us at the end of April and will continue to spend a few hours a week here in the office with me through the end of the fiscal year. If the need continues and there is available budget, I would love to keep Lisa on board for 5 hours a week in the next fiscal year.

Although I have a background in church administration, it has been a year of many firsts for me here at First Parish. I am very grateful to the staff (Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Keith Kirchoff, Rev. Eliza Blanchard, Rev. MaryHelen Gunn, Laci Adams, Boateng Serebour, and Adam Berman) and to all of you for your help getting me up to speed, your grace as I learn more and more, and your kindness and welcome that I have been shown from day 1, and for all the ways you have stepped up to help and lead throughout this time.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Alisa Joyce, Parish Administrator*

## **PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES REPORT**

**Care Coordination:** (Laura Walters /Julie Horvath) providing help with meals, rides and chores.

**Pastoral Care Associates:** Offer a compassionate listening ear and work directly with Rev. Rebecca

**Leadership:** Jon Hazilla, Chair

**Meetings:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday every month 7:15-8:45

**Membership Type:** Voluntary for Care Coordination: Pastoral Care By invitation of Rev. Rebecca

**Membership Term :** Open (9 members)

**E-mail:** [Care@firstparishbrookline.org](mailto:Care@firstparishbrookline.org)

**Accomplishments:** Workshop: *Death Café ,Spiritual Practices ,*  
Assisted with Candles of Joys and Concerns, offered purple care cards weekly in pews , offered additional support to congregation for Whithess theme in October, met with Membership /Welcoming chairs to discuss challenging situations, wrote new covenant, summer care coverage 10 weeks , Small Group Ministry \*, Retreat/Reentry August 2017

Rev. Rebecca Bryan  
Jon Hazilla ( S.GM. coordinator )\*  
Jeff Cadow ( new chair Fall 2018 )  
Dorothy Richardson ( on leave )  
Julie Horvath  
Laura Walters  
Paul Mclean  
Mary Rogers  
Ellie Boynton  
Anne Modena

Love and Blessings,

Jon Hazilla

## **ADULT FAITH FORMATION WORKING GROUP REPORT**

Last February 2017, four people gathered to discuss adult faith formation efforts. The core group of four included, Elena Garofoli, Eliza Blanchard, Nancy Marks and Sara Gibbons. By May 10th we had created a mission to better focus our efforts: "To provide opportunities for adults to connect more deeply with themselves and others in order to deepen their faith."

We reviewed and discussed a variety of curriculums, looking at how other churches developed a program that would help any seeker delve deeper and deeper into understanding U.U.ism and their own theology while building stronger bonds among people in the community.

We focused on being able to offer a variety of learning experiences for different styles of learning: three major learning types would include affective, didactic, and psychomotor.

We discussed offering these modalities in a three-year rotation and created a chart showing possible paths adults could choose in their exploration.

Another topic we spent some time discussing was what the congregation's reaction to different kinds of workshops and classes has been in the past, the needs of younger people/people with families, and what we might do to bring people in despite the stress on schedules. In addition, the working group expressed concerns about an effective structure for recruiting, vetting, and supporting teachers. We've discussed what's needed in a survey to capture the most useful data for course creation.

For the fall of 2017, workshop offerings included a course Spiritual Autobiography was offered, by Rev. Rebecca and Ann Copeland. Offered were four Small Group Ministry circles (see SMG annual report for details), a Death Cafe, a Spiritual Practices workshop (Rev. Rebecca and Jon Hazilla), and a Lectio Divina (Rev. Rebecca) series were filled this fall and winter. We also sponsored with the Membership Co. an introductory course we dubbed U.U. 101: it had to be cancelled as no one signed up.

The working group made the decision to create a summary of our research and ideas to date and table further action until our new minister was settled.

Respectfully submitted, on behalf of the Adult Faith Formation Working Group,

Eliza Blanchard

## **RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE - 2017-2018 REPORT**

*Members: Nathan Freitas, chair, Karley Ausiello (2-3rd Grade Love Will Guide Us), Anne Brown (6-7th Neighboring Faiths), Anne Harvey Kilburn (Nursery / Toddlers), Margaret Williams (8-9ths Our Whole Lives), Jaime Kim (K-1st Spirit Play), Jennifer Goulart (4-5th, Windows & Mirrors)*

### **Opening Thoughts**

After spending last year managing the RE program without a paid RE staff member, this year was a huge relief, thanks to the presence of CRE Laci Adams. Thanks to her quick uptake on the operational and organizational aspects of the work, the RE program has run very smoothly overall. We met monthly, on the first Tuesdays, with a planned agenda, and usually published minutes and action items as outcomes to the entire group over email. As the REC, we have focused on ensuring we have enough volunteers to provide continuity and coverage for all the scheduled classes and activities, and that our children and youth were being well cared for. We also worked with Laci to ensure she had the support needed to carry out the special programs, events and activities she had planned.

We spent a lovely Saturday together in April 7 in 2018, at a private home, in retreat, to reflect on our year, and plan for the next two, and the coming of a new minister. The outcomes of this retreat were three-fold. First, we developed a two year “2020 Vision” plan which you can see below, to both continue to guide our work, and to share with our new minister. Second, we decided to begin working on a human-to-human conversation process to gather feedback parish-wide on the RE program, and to more deeply build connections. Finally, we began our work on recruitment for teachers, volunteers and RE Committee members for 2018-2019.

At the end of this document, we have also included the write-up we developed in December 2017 for the Search Committee to include in the FPB Profile Packet. If you haven’t seen it, it provides a fairly comprehensive overview of how we see the RE program at this current time.

### **By the Numbers**

We enrolled **93** children and youth who were taught by, engaged with and cared for by roughly **30** volunteer teachers and paid nursery attendants. Average Sunday class attendance was 55 children or 58% of our enrolled.

Classes/curriculum included: Nursery; Me & My World (preschool); Spirit Play; Love Will Guide Us; Windows and Mirrors, Neighboring Faiths, OWL (Our Whole Lives – a part of the three year Coming of Age program) and Challenge. Outreach to older youth was done through special activities by the CRE, but otherwise we had no formal youth group this year.

Each Sunday we generally have 1 teacher and 1 supporting parent per classroom, with on average 5 students in each class for the younger years, and on average 9 for the older years.



The Neighboring Faiths groups visited 8 communities, and Challenge supported 9 youth and mentors in their process.

We held 6 Justice Seeking Sunday events and Children's Chapels. While not formally a REC event, we also supported the Christmas Pageant, which had roughly 15 angels, 7 shepherds, 3 magi, 3 lambs, 1 donkey, as well as Jesus, Mary and Joseph, naturally. We also had approximately 3 dozen colorful and confetti Easter eggs rolled, tossed and gently smashed on heads after the service.

## **REC 2020 Vision Goals**

By 2020, the RE Program will:

- I. Have a clear picture of youth life at FPB**
  - A. Learning goals are clear to all
  - B. We have a refreshed curriculum with regular updates
  - C. Kids know and say, "I am UU" and understand what it means
  
- II. RE is part of the overall fabric of FPB**
  - A. RE is integrated into church services
    1. Curriculum and classroom work is connected to worship service focus
    2. Kids run occasional services
  - B. Families are participating in social justice and community actions
  
- III. There is a strong, integrated culture with RE and the larger Church life.**
  - A. Parent and kids and all church feel known and connected to each other
    1. Every youth has a connection to 3+ adults that are not their parents
    2. Spontaneous gatherings of families are happening regularly
  
- IV. Structure and Operations are running smoothly**
  - A. Recruitment and training runs like a well-oiled machine
  - B. Measures of success include:
    1. Increased attendance
    2. Lower attrition rate
    3. 90% of RE families are members of FP

## **RE Committee Covenant**

- We covenant to grow in right relationship.
- We covenant to infuse joy into the process and content of our work.
- We covenant to create and adhere to practices that support reaching our program

and personal goals.

- We covenant to acknowledge our humanity and offer forgiveness to each other and ourselves.

### **RE Committee Goals**

- Provide a welcoming and safe environment for children and youth so that they think of First Parish as their church home.
- Intentionally support child-child and child-adult relationships so that each child and youth is known by name by other children and adults in the congregation.
- Teach children and their families about UU religion (including UU heritage, theology, the 7 principles and 6 sources).
- Engage members of the congregation in understanding and participating in the faith formation of our children and youth.
- Hold teacher enrichment events.
- Organize and run “Children’s Chapel” and “Justice Seeking Sunday” events in the chapel simultaneously with the 11:00 sanctuary worship service.

In addition, at our Spring 2018 RE Retreat, we collectively worked to brainstorm and define the practical duties of the Committee:

- Oversee faith formation program ages 0-18
- Co-creates calendar with Ministers, CRE, Worship Committee
- With Minister and CRE, decides on curriculum choices
- Facilitates special events and content
- Recruits teachers and volunteers
- Advise on hiring
- Responsible for communications to families
- Strives to integrate and connect across generations, church communities
- Big picture thinking, UU principles introduction, current events
- Handle specific family/child needs, support, discuss
- Bottomline Sunday RE activities, ensure classroom prep

### **Accomplishments**

1. We collaborated with and supported our new Coordinator of RE, Laci Adams
2. We held nearly monthly meetings, with agendas, note-taking and action items.
3. Created and managed a RE Calendar, which lays out the tasks of the RE Committee month by month, coordinated with the primary parish calendar
4. Successfully recruited and supported teachers and volunteers throughout the year
5. Provided paid staff for the nursery/toddler room, and supported development of regular activities and plans to handle both younger and older children
6. Facilitated class breakfasts, potlucks and other opportunities for RE classroom teachers, kids and parents to interact outside of the Sunday morning classroom.

7. Encouraged all RE families to participate in the Walk for Peace on Mother's Day.
8. We successfully addressed the need for consistent and watchful coverage of our nursery and toddler age children through two regular paid staff. This was a big concern in the past.

## Challenges

1. A larger number of RE committee members are reaching their 3-year term limit, and we do not have a large pipeline for new committee members
2. Volunteer teams need an orientation/training that focuses on teaching and facilitating children with challenging behaviors.
3. We will have many parents who do not consistently volunteer or participate in the RE program or the larger parish activities
4. Still unsure about charging a fee for non-members. (OWL currently charges a fee without much of an issue).
5. Need to update, improve curriculum, and ensure we are staying current and relevant

## Religious Exploration Write-up for the Search Committee "Packet"

Before sharing more formal details about our Religious Exploration program, we thought it might be helpful to set the mood. Below is an email written by Nathan Freitas, current Chair of the RE Committee, who also fills-in as a teacher when needed. After each class, teachers are encouraged to send out a summary of activities and any insights to parents. The email below was sent after a particularly touching Sunday morning class...

\*\*\*\*\*

*Hello "Love Will Guide Us" Parents!*

*I was fortunate to have the chance to be the "substitute" teacher yesterday for the class, and really enjoyed being with your kids. Our theme was "Love is Eternal", and we started with a discussion about what "Eternal" means. One student thought I said, "Love is a Turtle", so we then talked about just how long turtles can actually live, and then went on to talk about the lifespan of stars, rocks, plants and people. This led us well into reading our opening poem, "Ten Million Stars", which is definitely a favorite of mine.*

*This opening discussion led in to a more serious one on asking each student to share an experience of loss or death in their life, be it as pet, a family member, or even a favorite toy. Not everyone was required to share, but everyone was required to listen respectfully, which went very well. Our goal was to have them focus on the happy memories and love and discuss how those are also "eternal". My daughter spoke about our beloved old cat who passed when she was young, while another talked about their great aunt, who they were happy to have good memories with before she passed away.*

*Lastly, we moved outside to our "Circle of Life" nature walk. The question posed was "What if everything and everybody on earth lived forever?". We talk about how when things die, they are in fact providing energy and space for the next generation of life to bloom. We walked about the church looking for fallen trees, and rotted logs. Within these we found rich soil, saplings emerging, mushrooms growing, and even some really cool slugs. It was very hands on and generated some really wonderful insights by the kids.*

*Thanks again for having your family be a part of the RE program. Having the chance to spend time with your kids, and guide them through important lessons like these, means the world to me, and all of the RE teachers and volunteers*

*Best,*

*Nathan*

\*\*\*\*\*

This email is just one of the many written by our volunteer teachers, commemorating their experiences, and connecting to the larger parish community. We hope it gives you a small window into the experiences and environment we are trying to cultivate at First Parish Brookline. Now, we'll focus on how we are building these moments upon a robust, thoughtful foundation of curriculum and development.

### **Our Focus On Youth**

At First Parish Brookline, our Religious Exploration program is focused on our youth and children. We work to help each young member of our parish develop a respect for her or his own self-worth, concern for others, an enjoyment and appreciation of worship, reverence for the sacred and all life, rich and meaningful spiritual life, and an enduring connection with Unitarian Universalism. We also seek to assist them in nurturing a spiritual life, ethical awareness, and an identity informed by their community.

To do this, we offer a faith formation experience drawn from our Unitarian Universalist traditions, which affirms the great spiritual truths of all religions. Structured learning opportunities provide our children with an environment in which they explore, examine, learn and play with friends in age-appropriate groupings. Members of this community volunteer to teach, and in doing so, are able to learn and deepen their own spiritual connections. The children and youth at First Parish in Brookline are embraced by our community, which seeks to be a place of connection and growth for every age.

### **Growth By the Numbers**

The Religious Exploration program at First Parish Brookline is in the midst of growth – both in spirit and numbers. We have seen our registered students grow to over one hundred youth, with an average attendance of more than sixty each Sunday. We have

over twenty volunteer teachers, two paid childcare attendants, and many more in class parent volunteers across thirty-three weeks of teaching during the church year. All of this is planned, guided and monitored through the partnership between our staff Coordinator of Religious Exploration (CRE) and our parishioner-led Religious Exploration Committee (REC). This represents the largest RE program in the area, and we often draw in families and youth from other parishes.

## **What We Seek**

With each year, we learn more about the path of religious exploration, using curricula that best matches our vision of personal, spiritual and community growth. The rituals and intentions we bring to our gatherings are what make our faith community a place of inspiration and belonging, respite and reverence.

The goals of our program are to:

- Intentionally support child-child and child-adult relationships so that each child and youth is known by name, knows others by name, and knows at least a few others well
- Teach children and their families about the Unitarian Universalist Religion, including our heritage, theology, and the 7 principles and 6 sources
- Engage other members of the congregation in understanding and participating in the faith formation of our children and youth
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment that fosters for the children and youth a sense of this being their church home

## **Learning at a Levels**

For our youngest children, we offer a combined nursery and preschool program, sometime referred to as **Me and My World**. This is primarily a caregiving and play group, combined with storytelling and creative activities when at all possible. This is the first step in building relationships between the children themselves, as well as with adults from the parish.

Our kindergarten and 1st graders are invited to join **Spirit Play**, a UU Montessori Method approach to supporting children's spiritual inquiry. The purpose of the class is to help children find their own answers to such questions as "Where did we come from?" and "What are our gifts and how do we choose to use them?" Each week, a story based on one of the UU principles is told by a teacher, and afterwards, kids are asked "wondering questions", as in "I wonder how that felt", and express themselves through an activity.

2nd and 3rd graders are offered the **Love Will Guide Us** class, where they are taught to recognize and implement concrete actions grounded in love. We also strive to

strengthen participants' Unitarian Universalist identity through exploration of the Seven Principles and Six Sources. We emphasize love as the guiding force in our UU faith, addressing important theological questions in a simple yet honest way, providing participants with the opportunity and language to formulate their own ideas and beliefs. There is an introduction to world religions at a basic level, cultivating a respect for world religions and theological diversity.

In grades 4 and 5, we move to **Windows and Mirrors**, teaching that our faith is lived out through identifying and acting on responsibility toward one another. Introduces the reality and the impact of multiple perspectives and experiences as we live in this world, using the metaphor of a window and a mirror to help children better understand themselves in relation to others. We work to guide the children to identify and respect their own values, views and needs as well as those of others in a variety of contexts.

In 6th and 7th grade, we offer one of our most popular and lasting programs, **Neighboring Faiths**. This year we have over 20 students in this class! Through visits to houses of worship for many different faiths, we connect our youth to the religions of today's world and our relationship to them. Part religious literacy, part developing an understanding of UU, this program engages participants with religions on many levels. In anticipation of visits to houses of worship, there are several sessions each month dedicated to learning, exploring, and asking questions about a particular faith. Acknowledging that facts and figures are not enough, youth will engage in the spiritual practices and worship of the varying faith traditions by visiting houses of worship. After each visit, the class gathers together to process and discuss their experience. Integral to understanding the other religious traditions is that youth learn about this church and faith so that they can identify the similarities and differences. Youth will recognize the human needs religion serves in a historical context, while examining the most popular religions today. In addition, Neighboring Faiths is the first program in our larger Coming of Age sequence, which spans the 6th to 9th grade. As such, the program is structured to encourage youth participation and decision making and youth play a part in deciding which faiths to explore.

Our coming of age sequence continues with 8th graders both from our parish and many others, participating in the also very popular **Our Whole Lives (OWL)** program. Our OWL class this year is made up of 17 students from three parishes. OWL offers a comprehensive human sexuality program with up-to-date information and honest, age-appropriate answers to all participants' questions. Activities help participants clarify values and improve decision-making skills.

For 9th graders who wish to take a next important step, we provide the **Challenge** program as the culmination of our coming of age sequence. Our UU community has a long commitment to the journey of youth to articulate what they have given their heart

to. Through rigorous experiential learning, peer and mentor discussions, spiritual guidance, and worship -- our year-long Challenge experience aims to guide youth to answer the questions: What is my spiritual practice? Who are the people that I connect with in my faith community? How might I live out my faith in the world? This program culminates with the youth offering a worship service in which they share their Faith Statements with the congregation. “Challenge Sundays” are always powerful and popular, leaving an impact on the whole parish.

Finally, our **Youth Group** (10th, 11th, and 12th grade) is a program that is constantly being redefined by the youth themselves. In this busy, distracted era, we seek to not be yet another source of stress in their lives, but one of support and camaraderie. We also offer service opportunities for youth to become more involved in larger parish activities, both within RE and other events, committees and programs. This Spring’s youth programming is focused on college-readiness and service opportunities. The youth are exploring the questions, “What does it mean to be UU next?” To help answer this question, they will have the opportunity to serve local communities of their choice, to connect with UU Urban Ministry around questions of race and class, to develop relationships with local UU campus ministries, and to connect with each other and one of community ministers that does college ministry to discuss this time of transition.

### **Chapels, Social Justice and Multi-Generational Services**

In addition to our structured learning schedule, we also introduce other formats to provide ways for our youth and community to engage in other ways. Through Children’s Chapels, Justice Seeking Sundays and our Multi-Generation Services, we work to ensure the experiences of the children and youth remain deeply connected and in-tune with our core worship in the sanctuary.

Our **RE Chapels** are a children and youth worship service followed by a Faith in Action experience. We begin in the Sanctuary and when the children and youth are sung out they all come into Lyon Chapel for a 20-30-minute worship. The service is structured to provide an opportunity to experience all aspects of a full service, but in a less intimidating setting. Children are asked to light candles, express joys and concerns, lead songs, perform readings and more. We also invite members of the parish to lead the service or provide a sermon or other contribution. This provides another opportunity to build connections between the youth and members of our parish who are not normally involved in the RE program. Following the worship, we participate in an activity to deepen our understanding and engagement with the theme which has been presented.

**Justice Seeking Sundays** are another joint event, in a workshop format provided to learn about a current issue of social justice and ways we can create change. There is an opportunity to more deeply explore the topics, and to do some hands-on work to help heal the world. Four of these are topic based, relating to the worship service that day.

Additionally, the Thanksgiving Feast and Final Picnic Sundays involve service to this community by helping to prepare food, decorate tables, set up supplies, create activities for younger children.

Our **Multigenerational Worship Services** play an important role as we learn to live as one whole community of faith. The children and youth are with parents in the sanctuary for the worship service. They join in the flow of the church year, they develop relationships with all the adults, they participate as needed or able, they enjoy the music, they see first-hand the meaning of church to adults.

### **More To Do, For Many Generations**

We hope that the care, concern and pride we have in our program shines through in what we've written and shared here. We know that not only are we nurturing the next generation of our parish, but also of our broader community in Brookline, and the world. World and local events have shown that racism, sexism, hate and bigotry remain present in our daily lives. Our programs must provide our youth with the strength and tools to face them. We know we must continue to work to ensure that we are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of our youth and their families, as well. To this end, we are actively seeking opportunities to connect the work of the RE program with other work occurring in our community. For example, the adults of our parish have been actively undertaking multicultural competence and anti-racism training. We are now working with the Multicultural Committee to determine how to include our children and youth in that programming, while also ensuring and bolstering our in-class engagement with these essential and crucial topics.

We are also supporting the expansion of parent-to-parent interactions and family gathering opportunities. One exciting example of this expansion has been a quarterly gathering of our adoptive families! Not only do these gatherings provide moments of support and community but create a critical discussion of how best to support our adoptive families in our RE classrooms and in our broader community. We will also offer a variety of parent meet-ups this Spring to help foster relationships among our families, so that our parents might also experience the connection and community that we view as essential for our children and youth.

Our curriculum, workshops and events must not only reflect our values today, but reflect the better future we hope for ahead, for all. We hope you will join us, to shape that future, to guide us on our exploration, together.



## **SOCIAL ACTION ANNUAL REPORT**

Co-Chairs: Ellen Blaney and Clint Richmond

**Our Mission:** To provide inspiration, leadership and support for social action at First Parish in Brookline.

**Our Vision:** Our vision is for our congregation to live into the Seven Principles of our faith both inside the church and beyond our walls. And, in following our vision, that First Parish in Brookline be seen in the wider community as a place of active engagement in social justice, where people learn about and respond to critical issues and situations as a spiritual commitment. We support and advance the energy, interest, passion and compassion of our congregation and join efforts and intentions at First Parish in Brookline in helping to make a more just and equitable world for all.

**Our Actions:** We are guided by our congregational mission: Called by Love, Sustained by Community, Committed to Justice. Under this mission, Social Action is woven into the fabric of First Parish and lived out by its members through various organizational structures. In the face of so much injustice and opportunity, the Social Action program focuses on three thematic initiatives: **Siding with Love, Economic Justice**, and the **Environment**. We use various media to communicate news and events on a wide array of issues and events.

We also strive to build upon and integrate our efforts with the initiatives of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UU Mass Action Network, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry and community partner organizations. This year, we integrated social action and worship in four Sunday services focused on racial, immigration and climate justice. These included dedicated collections to support the missions of our community partner organizations.

Typically, over half of our congregation's adults and youth participated in some kind of Social Action activity. Together, we contributed over \$16,000 to date to support the work of other justice-seeking organizations.

### **Siding with Love:**

***We fought HIV and AIDS*** at the Harbor to the Bay bike ride from Boston to Provincetown. The First Parish team consisted of riders and pit crew of all ages and raised \$5,725 in this all-volunteer, grassroots fundraiser. We held a bake sale, rode, and we supplied and ran a pit stop. Thanks to Bijan Etemad, Madeline Fine, Rich Day and Tara Washburn for again leading this year's efforts. The next ride is September 15, 2018.

Our special monthly plate collection recipients included YoFES (Youth and Family Enrichment Services), a non-profit serving the Haitian American community here in Boston; Black Lives of UU; and the Chelsea Collaborative's Unidos por Puerto Rico efforts for communities affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

We supported Town Meeting actions regarding Indigenous Peoples' Day and renaming the Brookline Devotion elementary school that is presently named after a slaveholder.

***We walked in witness and support.*** We had a large contingent at the Black Lives Matter-led Fight Supremacy! Resistance March in August; the second annual Women's March for America in January; and the March for Our Lives rally in March. In May, thanks to the leadership of Liz Martin, we will again sustain our multi-generational presence at the Mother's Day Walk for Peace and against gun violence. This year, the regular Sunday service will be to walk together! We have already raised over \$500 for the sponsor, the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. In June, we look forward to continuing the energy from RE for the Boston Pride Parade on June 10.

***We supported immigration justice.*** This year the Immigration Justice Committee continued to take action in solidarity with community partner organizations and in interfaith collaborations as the current administration's aggressive anti-immigrant agenda increasingly criminalized, threatened and endangered our friends and neighbors. We are guided by a vision to be in community with one another, to keep the "borders" of our hearts and church open, to take our cues from the leadership and missions of Centro Presente, the Chelsea Collaborative and other immigrant rights organizers, to practice cultural humility and radical hospitality, to raise consciousness and encourage action at FPB through educational events, trainings and partnering opportunities, to respond to current immigration issues in the larger community, and to collaborate with UU congregations and other faith groups, activists and allies in Brookline and greater Boston.

Co-Chairs: Ellen Blaney and Tania Erlij

Members: Wendy Estrada, Ann Gilmore, Gerry Leader, Jody Leader, Martha Leader, Ron Sheffer, James Shillaber, Anya Spratley

***Activities and Events at First Parish in Brookline:***

- Organized two drives for clothing and supplies, provided volunteer support and hosted a People's Café in November for the Chelsea Collaborative's Unidos por Puerto Rico efforts.
- Co-organized our fourth annual Las Posadas celebration with the Chelsea Collaborative.
- In April, Sue Kalt arranged for us to sponsor a public screening of a documentary of the Native Andean spiritual leader Hipólito Peralta Ccama. Filmmaker Rodrigo Otero Heraud was also present along with members of the Quechua community in the Boston area. All joined afterwards for conversation and a celebratory dinner.
- Also, in April, hosted and co-organized interfaith Accompaniment Training gathering with St. Mary's and UU Mass Action, attended by 50+ participants

from Boston/Brookline, and hosted a People's Cafe for the Newton Sanctuary and Solidarity Collaborative (NSSC).

- In May, hosted a forum with Honduran activist-journalist Ely Castro Rosales, in collaboration with the UUSC and College of Social Justice.

***Actions beyond First Parish in Brookline:***

- Participated in interfaith vigils outside Suffolk County Detention Center in support of those detained within and in solidarity with their family and community members. Involved RE children with sign-making.
- Provided bilingual interpretation to Centro Presente community members at legal clinic for TPS holders
- As part of the accompaniment network, attended immigration court hearings in solidarity with families and provided additional direct support.
- Visited with men being held in detention at Suffolk as Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM) spiritual caregivers
- Rallied at actions led by community organizations on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program; Temporary Protected Status (TPS); and the Massachusetts Safe Communities Act (SCA). Advocated with legislators for a "Clean" Dream Act, the extension of TPS, and budget amendments for provisions from the Safe Communities bill after it went to study.
- Co-organized "Immigration Justice as Racial Justice" Forum with Boston Workmen's Circle, Temple Sinai, and United Parish. Patricia Montes and Jennifer Hernandez of Centro Presente and Natalicia Tracy of the Brazilian Worker Center presented.

**Environmental Justice:**

We financially support UU Ministry for the Earth with our annual contribution.

**Economic Justice:**

***We are a long-term partner with the UU Urban Ministry.*** We supported the UUUM with a special collection. We thank Karla Baehr for serving as the Chair of the Board and Barbara Simonetti for providing consulting services to the organization.

***We continue our commitments through Common Hope,*** which provides social service and educational support to low-income families in Guatemala. Since 2009, our congregation has been financing the education through high school of Dulce Maria Llanos Garcia, who is now in tenth grade; and many families sponsor individual children as well. We thank Karen Kepler and Anne Copeland for organizing a holiday gift market that raised funds by selling goods from A Thread of Hope, a women's artisan cooperative in Guatemala.

***We supported food banks.*** We donated the net fees from the Thanksgiving feast to two food banks. We continue to collect non-perishable foods for the Brookline

Food Pantry all year long. Thanks to Ed Loechler and Leslie Spaneas for delivering our contributions once a month.

**We value our ties to UU Social Action.** We are congregational members of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and UU Mass Action. We participated in this year's UU Mass Action Advocacy Day in April to support bills relating to all of our Social Action initiatives. We co-sponsored with the Book Group a discussion of the UUA Common Read, *Daring Democracy*, by Frances Moore Lappé and Adam Eichen.

## **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **2017-2018**

**Chair:** Ellie Boynton

**Members:** Alisa Joyce and Rev. Rebecca Bryan

**Mission Statement:** To help First 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 2017-2018:**

- Implemented better back-up, security, and anti-virus systems; improved functioning and security of local area network.
- Started using MailChimp for all-congregation emails; added online sign-up for email lists to website.
- Transferred email to Office365 and created aliases for committee chairs.
- Implemented Google Groups for committees and RE classes in place of old listservs.
- Transferred database from Church Windows to Breeze for improved online access and better data management and reporting.
- Maintained website – regularly updated Parish Committee reports, sermons (audio and text), Ministerial Search information, and Racial and Immigration Justice: Take Action page.

#### **Goals for 2018-2019:**

- Support new minister with set up of new email addresses, etc. and training if needed.
- Continued support of church staff and consideration of equipment upgrades/replacement.
- Continued development and updating of website to meet congregation's needs, including possible addition of live streaming of sermons or entire services.

### **Thanks to...**

- Scott Ullrich for taking photos and making recordings for inclusion in the website.
- Almas Dossas and Martha Leader for collecting and formatting content for the Racial and Immigration Justice: Take Action this week page.
- Alisa Joyce for taking on the database project and embracing all this new technology.
- Rev. Rebecca for lots of great ideas and the vision to help us move forward and make changes.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ellie Boynton

## **WELCOMING-MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

**May 1, 2018**

### **Welcoming-Membership Committee Members & Leadership:**

As of May, 2018, members are Dawn Avery, Alfred Brownell, Ann Dinsmoor (chair), Elena Garofoli, Sara Gibbons, Sheila Hussey, Whit Larrabee, Branch Moody, Julie Palmer, and Nick Peterson-Davis. Elena and Ann were co-chairs through April. Thank you for your commitment and skillful, loving service, Elena!

The 2017-2018 church year is the first year since 2008 that FPB has not had a part time membership coordinator staff position, making this a trial year to see how well we can manage welcoming and membership tasks without the support of a staff coordinator. As a result, our focus has been on developing sustainable systems for two major tasks: organizing Sunday morning greeters and following up with visitors. Grateful kudos to our new Parish Administrator, Alisa Joyce, for setting up tools and systems for recording volunteer sign-up and visitor information. Her expertise in helping us organize in these ways has mightily contributed to our successes this year.

### **I. Greeting at Sunday services**

This has been the core activity of the committee this year. Greeters welcome all who enter the Sanctuary on Sundays. They take the offering and make sure it's safely secured, count and record attendance, and seek out visitors during hospitality hour. We are now well-organized for all of this having drafted a greeter protocol, replaced the visitor information sheet with an individual pew card, developed a reliable practice for counting attendance, replaced the shabby and broken offering plates with new ones, bought new striped mugs for visitors to take to indicate their interest in conversation, and established a new practice for handling offering money based on 'the principle of two'.

14 volunteers have served as greeters and we honor their contribution: Alfred Brownell, Konah Brownell, Cath Cappelli, Michele David, Ann Dinsmoor, Matt Etemad-Gilbertson, Elena Garofoli, Sara Gibbons, Laura Hatfield, Sheila Hussey, Ibrahim Noor, Whit Larrabee, Branch Moody, Nanc Marks, and Laura Walters.

## 2. **Bell Ringing**

We are thrilled that this year Liz Martin, using her professional building inspection abilities, discovered a new way to safely ring the bell in the tower. A small and growing group of bell-ringers have been trained and now use SignUpGenius to schedule their turns ringing the bell at 10:55, calling us to worship each Sunday morning.

## 3. **Following Up with Visitors**

**Initial Contact:** Over the course of this fiscal year 44 visitors left contact information with us that enabled us to reach out via email to them afterwards to follow up. Several of them have since become regular attendees and/or members. For the future we are considering seeking phone numbers from visitors so that initial contact can be by phone instead of email.

**A System of Mentorship:** Informally and without an established system, the co-chairs have kept in contact with some visitors who return on Sundays. We want to build a system of mentorship (we may call these people “lightkeepers”) to connect individually with visitors who demonstrate interest in developing a relationship with people and programs at First Parish, believing that making personal connections will help visitors become engaged.

We will give this system a try for next year, having identified a volunteer who is ready to recruit a small cadre of mentors/lightkeepers. With the arrival of our new, settled minister, we anticipate many more visitors, including those with potential long-term interest. This behooves us to organize carefully before September so we’ll be ready for an increase in visitors and newcomers.

## 4. **Reconnecting with friends and members**

We have planned a way to reconnect with friends and members who haven’t been seen recently at First Parish: a representative from the Welcoming Committee and Pastoral Care Associates, the minister, and the CRE will work together to identify people. Their names will be taken to the Welcoming-Membership Committee for further review and follow-up contact. We believe doing this monthly will be effective use of everyone’s time, and result in caring, loving contacts.

## 5. **Other Initiatives:**

### Joining the Church

We played a small role in two joining ceremonies this year that Rev. Rebecca planned and conducted as part of Sunday morning services. We will want to work with our new minister to determine what role the Membership Committee should play in this process.

### Charter

We updated a committee “charter” to document the scope of our responsibilities.

### Engagement Faire

We sponsored a well-attended “Engagement Faire” in October designed to introduce newcomers, members and friends to opportunities for involvement in First Parish programs and services.

### Youth Engagement

We are working with the CRE to identify youth who could become interested in greeting and/or joining the Welcoming-Membership Committee.

### Other Events

This year has been unique with the many extra events organized by the Transition Team and Search Committee. The Welcoming-Membership Committee determined early in the year not to add additional activities to the calendar. In hindsight, we have missed the availability of one-off events that could be particularly inviting for visitors and newcomers.

Next year we will reassess our role in providing, or being certain that other groups are organizing, various and occasional events, such as circle suppers, newcomer dinners, new UU classes. We will also assess the relative effectiveness of individual follow up through the mentors as compared to group events.

### **A final Note:**

We are wrestling with our name. For a number of years we have been called “The Welcoming Committee” or “Welcoming Team”. This year we became “The Membership Committee”, in response to the need to take on the full scope of work that a traditional UU membership committee does without the support of a staff membership position. We have concluded that we need to incorporate “Welcoming” into our name once again in order to respond most effectively to what visitors are most often seeking when they come to First Parish: spiritual and human connection, “radical hospitality”.

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

May 2017-May 2018

**Co-chairs:** Martin Thomson and Nancy Clark

**Members:** Jessica Aguilera-Steinert, Matt Etemad-Gilbertson, Mark Gianino, Susan Larrabee, Gerry Leader, Sally Moore and Carol Spitzer

**Purpose / Mission Statement:** The members of the First Parish Worship Committee are the lay participants and worship associates in worship services, collaborating with minister(s) and staff to create a grounded and spiritual place for faith expression through the year.

### **Accomplishments Past Year (2017/2018)**

- Provided a lay face to the congregation at every Sunday Worship service throughout the year
- Supported ministers in leading Sunday worship including leading unison chalice lighting and candles of peace, and providing readings, testimonials, and prayers as needed
- Welcomed visiting ministers to the First Parish pulpit; providing them guidance and support prior to and during the service and greeted parishioners with them at the completion of the service
- Participated in twice-monthly staff meetings to plan Sunday Worship (attended by 3-4 rotating WC members)
- Held monthly committee meetings with the Minister to discuss recent and upcoming worship activities
- Provided feedback on Sunday worship (from the committee and relayed ad hoc feedback from the congregation)
- Hosted 3-hour Committee retreat in August 2017
- Worked with the Minister to choose worship themes for the first six months of the next church year
- Facilitated all summer 2017 worship services (recruited worship and music leaders, provided worship assistants, provided snacks, collected offering, etc.)
- Designed and held two workshops to recruit and train summer worship lay leaders using the guidelines and the order of service template designed last year
- Updated the Worship Committee Charter and revised our Covenant
- Endeavored to provide each member of the committee spiritual support throughout the year and to instill a sense of spirituality in our every interaction.

### **Tasks Next Year (2018/2019)**

- Facilitate summer 2018 worship
- Hold committee retreat in August/September
- With Lisa Perry-Wood, continue to support and assist with Sunday worship
- Continue to provide and relay feedback regarding Sunday worship
- Provide support for other worship activities outside of regular Sunday worship as needed.
- Recruit 3 new members to replace those rotating off. Look into recruiting 1-2 youth members.

We thank Reverend Rebecca Bryan and Alisa Joyce for essential support and guidance throughout the year.



## **FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

(Figures used are as of 5/16/18)

- I. Mission
  - a. Create, revise, and monitor financial policies of FPB
  - b. Submit an annual operating budget to the Board and review its accuracy quarterly
  - c. Advise the Board on matters of financial interest to the church, as appropriate
  - d. Communicate financial information to the church community regularly and with transparency
  
- II. Organization and Membership
  - a. **Finance Committee** is a working committee charged with fulfilling the mission outlined in Section I. The committee will be comprised of: Treasurer (chair), past treasurer, canvass representative, 1-2 additional members of the board, 1-2 additional members of the congregation, ex officio: minister, parish administrator, and PC chair.
  - b. **Membership in 2017-2018:** Benjamin Davis (chair), Rev. Rebecca Bryan (ex officio), Adam Berman (non-voting), Charles Sandmel, Adam Wilson, Ben Gibbons, Stacey Raczek (resigned), Margie Beal (as of 4/23/18).
  - c. **Finance Council** will be the church's mechanism for disseminating financial and budgetary information to key stakeholders, and for learning about the financial needs of different church committees and programs. In addition to the members of the Finance Committee, the Finance Council will be comprised of representatives from: Buildings and Grounds (Clint Richardson), Religious Exploration (Nathan Freitas and Laci Adams), Racial Justice Action (Gene Thompson-Grove and Almas Dossa), Transition Team (Anne Copeland and Mark Reynolds), Social Action Council (Ellen Blaney), Worship Committee (Martin Tompson and Nancy Clark), Membership Committee (Ann Dinsmoor), Building Use Committee (Adam Wilson and Sara Warren) and Safety Task Force (Ann Dinsmoor and George Maryniuk)
  
- III. Calendar
  - a. 9/18/17 Finance Committee
  - b. 10/16/17 Finance Council
  - c. 11/20/17 Finance Committee
  - d. 12/18/17 Finance Committee
  - e. 1/21/18 Finance Council

- f. 2/26/18 Finance Committee
- g. 3/19/18 Finance Committee
- h. 4/23/18 Finance Council
- i. 5/21/17 Finance Committee
- j. 6/18/17 Finance Committee

IV. Coordination between Canvass and FY19 Budget

- a. Clare Reilly and Melinda Maryniuk agreed to be Canvass co-chairs in 2018.
- b. Canvass goals included:
  - i. a target of \$60,000 of additional revenue to bring our endowment draw to 4.5%
  - ii. Achieving target through a combination of pledges, building use, and fundraising
  - iii. Increase this year's canvass goal to \$450,000 (7% increase over last year)
- c. A preliminary budget was drafted prior to the launch of Canvass in March so that information around staffing models and endowment draw could inform pledging.
- d. Congregational Conversation was held on 3/11/17 co-sponsored by the FC and Canvass

V. Staff Benefits

- a. The Finance Committee, in coordination with James Shilaber (effectively the Personnel Committee), reviewed the UUA Benefits Tune-Up Guidelines. We recommended, and the board approved, full compliance with the UUA guidelines for all staff members.
- b. Our music director, who works just less than 0.5 FTE, requested an increase in hours for FY 2018 in order to qualify for retirement benefits. This was recommended by the FC and approved by the board.

VI. Mission-based Accounting

- a. We reviewed the concept of mission-based accounting, and reviewed the work that Grace Lutheran Church had done in this regard. Broad approval of the idea at the Finance Council meeting in October.
- b. All committee chairs were asked to estimate volunteer time to capture not only dollars committed to our mission but also congregants' time. See attachment.

- VII. Planned Giving
  - a. A committee was formed to enact a policy and practice of soliciting planned donations. Charles Sandmel (chair) Stacey Raczek, and Deacons.
  - b. Plans to adopt a formal gift acceptance policy.
- VIII. Safety Task Force
  - a. Sue Andrews presented the safety task force priorities at the 2/26/18 Finance Committee meetings. These include:
    - i. Ice in the front parking lot
    - ii. Medical and first aid supplies
    - iii. Safety training
- IX. Building Use Committee
  - a. The Building Use Committee was re-dedicated. Sara Warren will chair and Adam Wilson will be representative to the Finance Committee.
  - b. Major Projects include:
    - i. Daycare Sara Warren
    - ii. Commercial Kitchen Adam Wilson
    - iii. Sanctuary Use Karla Baehr
  - c. A report was submitted to the FC and to the Board with specific proposals and budget requests. See attachment
- X. Breeze
  - a. The church will convert its pledging software to the online platform, Breeze.
  - b. Alisa Joyce and Adam Berman will implement.
- XI. Joint Committee on Building Maintenance
  - a. On 4/5/18 representatives of B+G, Safety Task Force, and Building Use met to enumerate priorities and to identify areas of coordination and overlap.
  - b. Going forward, the Finance Council which includes all of the constituents of this joint committee will be the forum where priorities about building use, maintenance, and safety are reviewed and budgetary recommendations are made.

- XII. Capital Campaign
- a. Rev. Rebecca gave a thoughtful and exciting vision for a capital campaign with a key message that planning is a multi-year process and should begin now in order to harness the energy that currently flows from our: mission statement; commitment to financial sustainability, and new minister.
  - b. These points were reviewed and endorsed by the Board.
- XIII. Activity Fees
- a. Because approximately 1/3 of the families with children enrolled in RE are not contributing members of FPB, the FC recommends to the board adopting a policy for charging fees for RE, either to all enrolled families or to non-member families.
  - b. The RE committee is still in discernment about whether to adopt RE fees.
- XIV. Outside Review of Finance Policies and Procedures
- a. Define roles of Treasurer, Administrator, and Minister
  - b. Define and document standard financial procedures (record keeping, check signing)
  - c. \$5000 was budgeted for this review. This money was not spent in FY18 and will be carried over to FY19.
  - d. This remains an unrealized goal of the FC committee because we could not find an accountant or firm willing to do this work. Charles Sandmel will continue this effort as Treasurer in FY19.
- XV. FY18 Profit and Loss compared with Budgeted numbers (Jul 2017 to Apr 2018):
- a. Income was \$4652 ahead of budget due to increased Sunday plate collections
  - b. Salary was \$4,633 less than budget
  - c. Fringe benefits were \$20,450 less than budget
  - d. Programmatic Spending was \$18,275 although most committees are planning to spend their balances by June 2018. One exception is the Search Committee which intends to return \$7,000, and also to pay for the new minister's installation celebration.
  - e. Functional Expenses were \$3,972 less than budget
  - f. Building Expenses were \$3,359 more than budget.
  - g. Our prediction for year end balance compared with budget is \$40,348.

XVI. FY19 Budget

- a. The Finance Committee discussed the concept of Sustainability. This term was felt to encompass *not only* financial sustainability (neutral endowment draw, approximately 4.5% per year) but also sustainability for the building at Walnut St, and sustainability for staff (clear and realistic job expectations with experience and performance review integrated into salary decisions).
- b. A key finding of transition team survey in 2016 and of the search committee survey in 2017 was the importance to the congregation of reducing our draw on endowment to a sustainable level. The Finance Committee supports achieving this goal of 4.5 % endowment draw in the next 1-2 years.
- c. A budget was drafted and reviewed with the Finance Committee on 12/18/17
- d. The draft budget was reviewed with the Finance Council on 1/22/18 at which time budgetary requests were solicited and accepted.
- e. Congregational Budget hearings were held on 3/11/18 and 4/22/18. An interactive tool developed by Laura Hatfield was used to illustrate how changes in staffing models, contributions to the building reserve fund, and programmatic support would change the expected endowment draw.
- f. A nearly final draft budget was reviewed again with the Finance Council on 4/23/18 to assess any impact on programs.
- g. The Board met twice to review and approve the budget on 5/7/18 and 5/14/18.
- h. The following budgetary decisions were made:
  - i. Money budgeted but not spent in **FY18** (estimated to be \$40,348) would be used to pay for:
    1. DEEP \$10,000
    2. Commercial Kitchen Upgrade \$4,000
    3. A Preschool Feasibility Survey \$5,000
    4. A retroactive pay to our Custodians, Boetang and Oppong because their pay over the past two years had not been at the mid-point \$4,808
  - ii. All staff would be brought to the UUA midpoint salary.
  - iii. Additional administrative assistance totaling \$4,500
  - iv. AV Specialist \$1,600
  - v. Increase in RE budget by \$2,000 for youth programming and teacher development
  - vi. Increase in nursery time \$500

**vii. The endowment draw in the last three approved budgets fell:**

<b>1. FY2017</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>2. FY2018</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
<b>3. FY2019</b>	<b>5.9%</b>

**XVII. Endowment**

- a. Compared with May 2018, the endowment grew from \$2,220,386 to \$2,411,073, due to fewer withdrawals than anticipated and realized investment gain.

**FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE**  
**Projected Income Statement FY 2018**

	Approved FY 2018	Estimated Actuals FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019
<b>INCOME</b>			
Pledges	428,571	425,347	440,000
Building rentals	16,000	9,978	26,000
<b>Fees and Other</b>			
Sunday Offering	10,000	19,873	18,000
Activity Fees	3,000	2,200	2,500
Other Donations	5,000	8,795	5,000
Grants and Designated Income	5,000	5,000	5,000
Interest	50	50	50
<i>Subtotal Fees and Other</i>	23,050	35,918	30,550
<b>Fundraising Events</b>	-	-	-
<i>Subtotal</i>	467,621	471,243	496,550
<b>Endowment</b>			
Withdrawal based on \$2M Balance	6.5%	4.7%	5.9%
Endowment Transfer	155,274	113,135	140,451
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	622,895	584,378	637,001
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Payroll - Salaries</b>			
Interim Senior Minister - <i>FTE</i>	94,575	-	105,200
* <i>Ministerial Other</i> (Contribution to Minister's Social Sec)	14,318	-	15,476
Coordinator of Religious Ed - <i>Full time</i>	44,450	-	46,350
Music Director - <i>1/2 time</i>	30,250	-	31,450
Section Leaders	16,000	-	16,000
Parish Administrator - <i>FTE</i>	52,150	-	54,250
AV-Specialist	-	-	1,600
Bookkeeper	-	-	6,000
Sexton/Custodian - <i>FTE</i>	33,150	4,808	36,500
Temporary Help	2,000	-	4,500
Nursery	3,000	-	3,500
<b>Benefits - Prof Expenses, Health, Taxes, Pension</b>	82,102	57,562	99,325
<b>Total Payroll Expense</b>	371,995	344,702	420,151
* <i>Ministerial other - Ministers are treated as Contractual Employees and therefore pay their own social security. FPB contributes the recommended amount which is a % of the minister's total</i>			
<b>Program-related</b>			
Denominational	19,000	19,000	19,000
Sunday Services - Music	6,500	6,500	6,500
Religious Exploration	6,500	6,500	8,500
Special / Committee Funding	27,900	35,276	12,900
Welcome Team	500	500	500
<i>Subtotal</i>	60,400	67,776	47,400
<b>Functional</b>			
Administration & Office	57,500	29,200	27,850
Building Operations	93,000	102,700	101,600
	150,500	131,900	129,450
<b>B&amp;G Investment Reserve</b>	40,000	40,000	40,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	622,895	584,378	637,001
<b>NET</b>	0	-	-

**FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE**  
**Projected Income Statement FY 2018**

**EXPENSE DETAIL**

	Approved FY 2018	Estimated Actuals FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019
<b>Administration &amp; Office</b>			
Administrative Transition	19,000	-	-
Office Supplies	4,250	3,400	3,400
Telephone	5,000	3,000	3,000
Postage	750	600	600
Printing & Copying	2,000	1,000	1,000
Equipment Lease	5,000	4,500	4,500
Computer/Software/ New Tech	4,500	3,500	3,500
Hospitality	4,000	4,000	4,000
Website	800	-	-
Flowers	500	350	350
Miscellaneous	250	-	-
Bank Services Fees	500	300	300
Credit Card Fees	1,000	3,000	3,000
Payroll Processing Expenses	3,600	4,200	4,200
D&O Insur / Fin Review (\$5K)	6,350	1,350	-
Ministers Discretionary Exp	-	-	-
<i>Subtotal</i>	<b>57,500</b>	<b>29,200</b>	<b>27,850</b>
<b>Building Operations</b>			
Commercial Insurance	30,000	33,600	36,500
Fuel - Oil	25,000	23,000	23,000
Utilities	7,600	10,000	10,000
Municipal Fees	1,900	2,600	2,600
Snow Removal	5,000	6,000	6,000
Repairs & Small Projects	12,000	9,000	9,000
Cleaning Supplies	3,000	2,000	2,000
General Maintenance	7,500	12,000	12,000
Commercial Kitchen Upgrade	-	4,000	-
Parish Furnishings	1,000	500	500
<i>Subtotal</i>	<b>93,000</b>	<b>102,700</b>	<b>101,600</b>
<b>Specific Committee Funding</b>			
Care Ministry	1,000	1,000	1,000
Diversity	800	800	800
Historic Archives	100	100	100
Building Use	-	5,000	-
Safety Task Force	-	-	-
Parish Committee	4,000	4,000	4,000
Search Committee	15,000	7,376	-
Ministerial Transition	-	-	-
Multicultural/Anti-Racism	-	10,000	-
Social Action	4,000	4,000	4,000
Worship	3,000	3,000	3,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<b>27,900</b>	<b>35,276</b>	<b>12,900</b>



# Ministers

Recommendations assume full-time (40 hours for nonexempt) and do not include the cost of benefits or payroll taxes. Refer to **Guide to Salary Recommendations**.

## Notes for setting ministerial salaries:

- All recommendations are for Salary + Housing.
- **Second minister salaries** should be determined primarily by level of responsibility, authority, and impact relative to lead minister, regardless of title. May blend Associate/Assistant salary lines.
- **Program ministers** (e.g., Minister of Pastoral Care, Minister of Music, Minister of Religious Education) are generally treated as second ministers - Associate, Assistant, or blend.
- **Interim minister salaries** should be at midpoint or above.

TITLE <i>See capsule job descriptions</i>	Small			Midsize I			Midsize II			Midsize III			Large I			Large II		
	<150 members			150 - 249 members			250 - 349 members			350 - 499 members			500 - 749 members			750+ members		
	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX
<b>Lead Minister: Solo, Senior, or Co-lead</b>	57,750	72,400	86,850	72,200	92,100	111,800	80,850	105,200	129,450	88,300	115,700	143,550	95,650	126,400	157,750	119,300	161,050	202,550
<b>Second Minister: Associate function</b>	52,450	62,450	72,450	60,000	76,650	93,300	67,450	87,600	107,800	73,550	96,600	119,600	79,550	105,600	131,400	103,150	139,100	175,050
<b>Second Minister: Assistant function</b>	50,650	59,900	69,150	56,600	64,250	77,900	55,750	73,000	90,100	58,650	79,250	100,000	61,400	85,650	109,900	76,650	109,000	141,150

# Religious Education Staff

Recommendations assume full-time (40 hours for nonexempt) and do not include the cost of benefits or payroll taxes. Refer to **Guide to Salary Recommendations**.

## Notes for setting religious education staff salaries:

- Be sure to use the appropriate position based on our capsule job descriptions, regardless of your congregational position title.
- "Credentialed" refers to those who have completed UUA RE Credentialing Program at one of three levels.
- Religious Education program size may impact placement within the range, if it is especially large or small relative to membership.
- Religious Education staff primarily responsible for providing clerical/administrative support should be classified as Administrative staff.

TITLE <i>See capsule job descriptions</i>	Small			Midsize I			Midsize II			Midsize III			Large I			Large II		
	<150 members			150 - 249 members			250 - 349 members			350 - 499 members			500 - 749 members			750+ members		
	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX
<b>Credentialed, Master Level</b>	46,700	54,800	62,900	51,300	58,900	66,500	62,000	68,400	74,450	70,050	77,150	84,100	78,000	85,850	93,700	99,000	108,900	118,750
<b>Credentialed, Credentialed Level</b>	44,100	51,750	59,400	48,350	55,550	62,700	58,500	64,500	70,200	66,050	72,800	79,300	73,600	80,950	88,350	93,350	102,650	111,950
<b>Credentialed, Associate Level</b>	41,400	48,650	55,800	45,550	52,200	59,100	56,100	61,650	67,500	62,150	68,350	74,500	68,050	75,000	81,750	80,550	88,650	96,650
<b>Religious Educator</b>	39,450	45,450	53,400	43,400	51,100	58,700	49,650	58,350	66,850	54,300	63,900	73,400	59,000	69,450	79,800	68,300	82,250	94,350
<b>Religious Education Coordinator</b>	31,350	36,150	41,550	34,550	40,650	46,800	39,400	46,350	53,250	43,000	50,750	58,350	46,950	55,150	63,400	54,250	65,250	75,100

# Music Staff

Recommendations assume full-time (40 hours for nonexempt) and do not include the cost of benefits or payroll taxes. Refer to **Guide to Salary Recommendations**.

## Notes for setting music staff salaries:

- Be sure to use the appropriate position based on our capsule job descriptions, regardless of your congregational position title.
- "UUA Certified" refers to those who have completed the UUA Music Leadership Certification Program.
- When hiring contract musicians (rather than staff musicians), we suggest consulting your local musicians' union to determine appropriate rates.

TITLE <i>See capsule job descriptions</i>	Small			Midsize I			Midsize II			Midsize III			Large I			Large II		
	<150 members			150 - 249 members			250 - 349 members			350 - 499 members			500 - 749 members			750+ members		
	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX
UUA Certified Music Director	43,850	51,550	61,800	49,250	57,950	66,600	56,250	66,150	76,000	61,100	71,900	79,600	72,300	85,050	97,850	85,650	100,700	119,850
Music Director	40,100	49,350	60,700	42,850	53,050	64,250	54,250	62,900	71,600	59,900	70,500	80,950	65,700	77,950	90,200	77,750	95,950	114,300
UUA Certified Choir Director	33,450	41,400	50,900	38,000	45,700	55,350	45,950	53,400	61,450	51,250	60,400	69,250	56,800	67,450	78,100	67,200	82,900	98,600
Choir Director	31,900	39,450	48,500	36,500	43,900	53,200	44,250	51,250	58,300	48,850	57,350	66,000	53,600	63,550	73,500	63,250	78,250	93,150
Instrumentalist	26,250	32,350	39,750	28,800	34,750	42,000	35,650	41,300	46,900	39,350	46,200	53,150	43,150	51,150	59,200	50,900	62,950	74,950

# Membership Staff

Recommendations assume full-time (40 hours for nonexempt) and do not include the cost of benefits or payroll taxes. Refer to **Guide to Salary Recommendations**.

## Notes for setting membership staff salaries:

- Be sure to use the appropriate position based on our capsule job descriptions, regardless of your congregational position title.
- Membership staff primarily responsible for clerical/administrative support should be classified as Administrative staff.

TITLE <i>See capsule job descriptions</i>	Small			Midsize I			Midsize II			Midsize III			Large I			Large II		
	<150 members			150 - 249 members			250 - 349 members			350 - 499 members			500 - 749 members			750+ members		
	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX
Membership Director	44,050	51,700	59,350	48,350	55,550	62,700	58,400	64,450	70,150	66,000	72,750	79,250	73,550	80,900	88,300	93,350	102,650	111,950
Membership Manager	37,400	43,050	50,600	41,100	48,400	55,600	50,250	55,200	60,400	51,300	60,500	69,450	55,850	65,750	75,500	64,600	77,800	89,250
Membership Coordinator	31,350	36,150	41,550	34,550	40,650	46,800	39,400	46,350	53,100	43,000	50,750	58,350	46,950	55,150	63,400	54,250	65,250	75,100

# Administrative and Operations Staff

Recommendations assume full-time (40 hours for nonexempt) and do not include the cost of benefits or payroll taxes. Refer to **Guide to Salary Recommendations**.

## Notes for setting administrative and operations staff salaries:

- Be sure to use the appropriate position based on our capsule job descriptions, regardless of your congregational position title.
- Check minimum and prevailing wage rates in your location. Adjust our recommendations as appropriate to take into account the minimum wage and local norms.

TITLE <i>See capsule job descriptions</i>	Small			Midsize I			Midsize II			Midsize III			Large I			Large II		
	<150 members			150 - 249 members			250 - 349 members			350 - 499 members			500 - 749 members			750+ members		
	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX
<b>Business Administrator</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	58,850	72,300	85,550	61,350	75,950	90,500	63,800	79,650	95,400	68,750	85,950	103,150
<b>Congregational Administrator</b>	44,450	52,200	59,950	45,400	53,400	61,300	46,250	54,250	62,350	46,850	55,700	64,650	47,700	57,250	67,000	48,300	59,050	70,100
<b>Office Administrator</b>	34,900	40,850	46,950	36,200	42,550	49,050	36,600	43,300	49,650	37,750	44,450	50,950	38,900	45,600	52,300	39,350	47,100	55,200
<b>Office Assistant</b>	29,550	34,350	40,000	29,900	35,150	40,650	30,850	35,950	41,550	31,300	36,800	42,600	32,100	37,850	43,350	32,950	38,750	44,600
<b>Bookkeeper</b>	38,550	45,400	52,050	39,250	46,250	53,050	39,950	46,750	53,800	40,850	47,950	55,150	41,900	49,300	56,500	42,650	51,150	59,700
<b>Childcare Worker</b>	28,350	32,250	37,100	28,950	32,900	37,850	29,550	33,600	38,650	30,200	34,300	39,350	31,000	35,200	40,350	31,750	36,150	41,450
<b>Childcare Worker, Hourly rate</b>	13.63	15.50	17.82	13.93	15.83	18.19	14.21	16.15	18.56	14.53	16.50	18.93	14.90	16.92	19.40	15.28	17.38	19.93
<b>Custodian</b>	30,800	35,050	41,200	31,450	35,800	42,050	32,150	36,500	42,900	32,750	37,250	43,750	33,600	38,150	44,900	34,550	39,200	46,050
<b>Custodian, Hourly rate</b>	14.80	16.85	19.80	15.12	17.20	20.23	15.45	17.56	20.62	15.75	17.90	21.03	16.15	18.35	21.58	16.60	18.86	22.15