

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
December 7, 2015**

**PC Members Present:** Sue Andrews, Ben Davis, Steve Davis, Ann Dinsmoor, Elena Garofoli, Ann Gilmore, Stacey Raczek, and James Shillaber. Also present – Rev. Jim and Rev. Rebecca Bryan

Elena led us in a centering and lit the chalice.

**Introduction of New Interim Minister**

Ann D introduced Rev. Rebecca Bryan as our new interim minister starting in January, 2016 and expressed her excitement about the gifts Rev. Rebecca will share with our congregation, including:

- Her work with organizations that are developing
- Her extensive experience with fund raising
- Her experience with supervision - in church and business settings
- Her valuing of ritual and tradition while also embracing change

**Check in:** What are we grateful for this season?

**Further Introduction of Rev. Rebecca**

Sue and James, members of the Interim Minister Task Force further introduced Rev. Rebecca with great enthusiasm. She conveys seriousness and deliberateness, but also enthusiasm and excitement about being our minister. She has a directness and accessibility in style that is easy to work with. She has sterling references

**Rev Rebecca Introduces Herself**

Rev. Rebecca thanked us for selecting her as our Interim Minister. She noted that she brings both ministry and consulting to our change process. In particular she finds meaning and joy working with people who have a shared vision for something - a vision based on values. She fielded questions from the PC, and indicated that:

- She will do the Interim Minister Network training, starting in February
- She has a coach who has been an interim minister for many years
- She also has a mentor for her ministerial fellowship
- She will first get to know us and become our minister, at the same time that the PC and Transition Team identify the issues to be addressed
- We will agree upon goals together to guide our work together later

We agreed that she will start on January 4th in the office, and her first time preaching will be Jan 10, followed by a reception.

**Song** – Sue led us in singing “This Little Light of Mine” as we ushered in Rev. Jim for his final PC meeting, and we enjoyed a wonderful pound cake made by Ann D.

**Rev. Jim’s Parting Thoughts**

Rev. Jim joined the meeting at 8 pm to share some of his parting thoughts for the PC in the areas of community, staff, finances, building, and assets.

Revs Jim and Rev. Martha focused on right relationship and small group ministry, and he feels the congregation has developed significantly in the last decade. Membership and pledging have significantly increased.

Rev. Jim noted that his strategy of hiring part-time staff vs. a couple full-time people has brought the congregation diversity and many perspectives.

Finances - pledging has increased 400% since when Revs. Jim and Martha started, but we are still relying too much on the endowment. We have tremendous assets and also big liabilities and costs to maintain the building. Rev. Jim also notes we will need to do a capital campaign at some point if we want to stay in this building. We will need approximately \$1.5M, which he feels is doable on a pledge base of \$400K. In the end, Rev. Jim feels that investment in programs is correlated with increases in pledges. He will be sharing his thoughts and opinions on our church finances at the upcoming Finance Council meeting

Rev. Jim is pleased that he has influenced our financial well being, but he also wants to know that he has affected our spiritual health as well, and the comments shared with him by congregants over the past few months have convinced him that he has. His final sermon on December 20<sup>th</sup> will focus on sharing his top five spiritual practices, which include gratitude, resilience, surrender of ego, tithing, and loving kindness.

We ended with Rev. Jim offering a closing prayer, along with his ritual of all standing, holding hands and saying, "Thank you for helping us do together what we cannot do alone.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Gilmore, Clerk

*With gratitude to James for providing excellent notes of the meeting*