

Parish Board Meeting

March 2, 2022

Minutes

Present: Karla Baehr, Micaela Coady, Jen Guillemain, Jody Leader, John Mignano, Margaret Williams, Bob Williamson (Chair)

Absent: Alfred Brownell

Other: Rev Lisa

Chair Bob Williamson called the meeting to order at 7:05. Rev Lisa lit a chalice and read *Love in Kyiv* by acclaimed Ukrainian poet Natalka Bilotserkivets. Members took turns reading the Board's covenant. We checked in by responding to the prompt: *where did you walk today and, if you weren't able to take a walk, where do you wish you had been able to walk?* As a first experiment with using the Justice Pause process, members read the questions we have committed to taking into account as we conduct our business:

- **Awareness:** What would we like to say that hasn't been said?
- **Inclusion:** Who are we not hearing from? Why?
- **Relationships:** Is this conversation/action/project moving towards relationship?
- **Acknowledgments:** Are we acknowledging the history? What and who would you like to acknowledge and celebrate?
- **Process & Practice:** Are we on the right track? Do we need to update our practices and processes?
- **Goals:** Are we moving towards more and/or improved equity and inclusion practices?
- **Implicit Biases:** Where are our blind spots and biases?
- **Never Would I Ever:** What social issues do I feel I must recuse myself from, that I would risk publicly refusing my work to support?

We shared insights and wonderings about the questions.

Minister's Report

Rev Lisa shared for Board discussion highlights from her report:

- RPG recommendations related to masking
- Rev Lisa will bring recommendations for a plan to for communicating about Rev Lisa's sabbatical
- Erin Scott has accepted the Selection Committee's invitation to serve as our Intern Minister starting in September 2022, serving for two years
- Ebiere Omergie is expecting her first child and arrangements are underway to ensure coverage
- Four new members are needed for the Board for 2022-23, replacing current members Bob Williamson, Karla Baehr, and Micaela Coady, and departed member Em Cherry.

Fiscal Health Status and Canvass Report

Treasurer Margaret Williams reported that Canvass will be coordinated with the Budget Development process. Board members will once again be asked to solicit pledges from about 13 people during March. Margaret shared this timeline and expectations of Board members:

- March 13: Kick Off Sunday
- March 15-17: Solicitation emails sent from office
- March 15: Canvass Training and Role Play
- March 20: Sunday Testimonial
- March 27: Sunday Testimonial

- April 3: Preliminary Report to Board about results for budget planning purposes
- April 10: End of Canvass
- April: Board members may be solicited to support the “clean up”, reaching out to members who have not yet responded

Margaret and Bob encouraged **Board members to make their own pledge early** as a way the Canvass Team can demonstrate to the congregation commitment. Margaret will ensure that all Board members have a pledge form.

The Board adopted the timeline by consensus (6 5's and 1 4)

Board Organization Planning for Next Year

Returning Board members **Alfred Brownell, Jen Guillemine, Jody Leader, and John Mignano will meet** before the April Board meeting to consider how the roles of chair and vice-chair for next year can be filled.

Board Goals

Religious Exploration (#4): Board members had reviewed the preliminary report to the Board from RE consultant Deb Weiner in advance of the meeting. Micaela Coady described the context and sources of data for the report, explaining that Deb will hold an open focus group online from interested members on Sunday, March 20th, 1:00-2:30pm. **Micaela urged Board members to participate** and talk it up among members.

She highlighted and members discussed these early recommendations:

- Hiring a part-time RE, possibly sharing a position with another congregation
- Focusing “curriculum” on community building
- Advertising for a RE position by mid-April, if possible
- Considering hiring a part-time Youth Advisor

Community Building (#8): Jen Guillemine reported ways in which the Board has made progress on this goal. Members reviewed the draft *At-a-Glance: Small Group Opportunities* which describes all the current opportunities available for members and friends to engage at First Parish beyond the Sunday service. Board members discussed how to make the best use of it for Canvass and more broadly to generate enthusiasm and engagement among members for the opportunities at First Parish to make connections and nurture spiritual growth.

Jen and Karla will collaborate on writing a more “inviting” introduction to the document.

Upcoming Meetings

- **March 20 1:00-2:30 RE Focus Group Dialogue with Deb Weiner**
- **March 22nd 7:00-8:30 pm: Presentation on Repair and Reparations co-sponsored with RJAC - postponed**
- **Exec Committee Wednesday February 23, 5:00-6:15 (Zoom)**
- **April Board Meeting Sunday, April 3 1:00-3:00pm in person**

Closing

Members shared appreciations for each other's contributions before Bob adjourned the meeting at 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr, Clerk