



First Parish in Brookline

A WELCOMING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

May 7, 2012

Dear Member of First Parish in Brookline,

Join us on Sunday, May 20th, from 1:00 to 2:30 for our Annual Meeting. We plan to celebrate people and programs so please join us! Child care provided!

Our Agenda

- Call to Order by Moderator
- Chalice Lighting and Opening Hymn
- Approve Minutes of 2011 Annual Meeting
- Recognize and elect new members
- Elect Officers and Committee Members
- Celebrate Robin Barraza's Ministerial Internship
- Introduce Sarah Napoline as next year's Intern
- Approve the Ordination of Jennifer Dillinger
- Progress Reports:
 - Policy Governance
 - FY 2013 Budget and Sustainability
 - Vote on FY 2012-13 Budget
 - Engagement Committee
- Affirm congregation-wide social action issues
- Any Other Business
- Closing Hymn
- Adjourn

Hoping to see you at 1:00 in Lyon Chapel on Sunday, May 20th!

Chip DeWitt,
Parish Committee Chair

382 Walnut Street
Brookline, MA 02445-7563
617-566-1933

New Parish Members

The following 25 people have signed the membership book since our last Annual Meeting:

Hillary Allen	Terasa Cooley	Alan Niebanck
Amber Brown	Chris Gordon	Bonita Oehlke
Karen Campbell	MaryBeth Gordon	Carol Porcari
Gregory Caplan	Matt Higger	Robert Reithmiller
Susan Caplan	Angela Insinger	Diane Shannon
Gar Chiang	Mori Insinger	Nadia Swartz
Eleanor Clarkson	Kristin McIntire	Esther Tsang
Chuck Collins	Sarah Menchu	
Heather Concannon	Katie Naftzger	

Officers and Standing Committee Members

The Leadership Development Committee nominates the following members:

For Clerk of the Parish	Jeremy Schwab
For Treasurer	Ryan Kim
For Moderator	Janet Sanders
For the Parish Committee	Greg Buckland Steve Davis (Vice Chair) Ann Congleton
For the Finance Council	Midge Wilcke (Chair) Sonya Abbott (Parish Administrator) Chip DeWitt (Parish Committee Chair) Bill Dwyer (Investment Chair) Ryan Kim (Treasurer) Rev. Jim Sherblom (Co-Minister) Will Spears (B&G Co-Chair) TBD (Annual Stewardship Chair)
For Leadership Development Committee	Martin Thomson Melinda Marynuik
For the Religious Education Committee	Dave Demerjian Rob Guillemin Scott Ullrich Julie Palmer

Respectfully submitted,
Jeremy Schwab
Clerk of the Parish

**First Parish in Brookline
Minutes of the 294th Annual Meeting
May 22, 2011**

Present: 73 active members signed in to receive ballots, representing a quorum (\geq 15% of 267 active members)

Moderator: Janet Sanders

The meeting began at 1:00 pm, with a song (“Spirit of Life”)

Welcome: All present were welcomed and reminded that the meeting was to be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order.

Minutes: The minutes from the 2010 annual meeting were unanimously approved.

New Members: The following 38 people signed the membership book since the 2010 Annual Meeting:

Cathleen Ambrose	Elizabeth Eyerer	Pamela Morrone
Edwin Ambrose	Justin Francese	Kayla Parker
Jennifer Wiley Bell	Elaine Garofoli	Sue Reamer
Ethan Brackett	Maria Elena Gonzalez	Heather Ross
Dole Canning	Sarah Griffen	Celeste Royce
Joseph Cleveland	Evan Grossman	Lourdes Sariol
Kristin Cleveland	Wendy Swart Grossman	Jeremy Schwab
Carrie Chu	Marthe Hesselmanns	Rhoda Serafim
Georgia Couden	Martine Lebret	Chris Wozniak
Timothy Gill Dailey	Paul Mathew	Rachel Wozniak
Dave Demerjian	Sonia Mathew	Karley Ausiello
Nina Douglass	Sarah Miller	Matt Brackett
Sarah Moghtader	Paul Moghtader	

A motion to accept these new members was seconded and passed unanimously.

Nominations: The following names were proposed by Karla Baehr, representing the Parish Committee, as officers and members of standing Committees:

For Clerk of the Parish	Jeremy Schwab
For Moderator	Janet Sanders
For Treasurer	Ray Wellbaum
For the Parish Committee	Greg Buckland
	Ryan Kim
	Jeremy Schwab
	Anya Thomas
For the Finance Council	Midge Wilcke
	Chip DeWitt
	Ray Wellbaum
	Bill Dwyer
	Melinda Maryniuk
	Liz Martin
	Sonya Abbott
	Rev. Jim Sherblom

For Leadership Development Committee Liz Scully
 Kayla Parker
 Elaine Garafoli

For the Religious Education Committee Gene Thompson-Grove
 Claire Reilly
 Scott Ullrich

A motion to accept these nominations was seconded and approved.

Recognitions: Karla Baehr, chair of the Parish Committee, introduced and recognized the following people:

- Out-going members of the Parish Committee
- Our new DRE, Rebecca Keller-Scholl (who arrived at the meeting at a later time)
- Our newly ordained former ministerial intern, the Reverend MaryHelen Gunn
- Keith Kirchoff, who as of July 1st will be Music Director rather than Choir Director.

She also announced that Rev. Jim will be beginning his sabbatical after the first service in December and will be returning in time for the 2012 Annual Meeting. Our new ministerial intern, Robin Barraza, will be working full time during the 2011-12 church year to help fill in for Rev. Jim's absence.

Progress Reports from Parish Committee and Others: Karla called attention to the FY2011 Co-Ministers' Annual Report, particularly the second paragraph summarizing our growth and our challenges. She asked each person to briefly discuss with the person next to them, "how does that make you feel?"

She then discussed the change in focus that the Parish Committee is making towards **Policy Governance**. (See the Report of the Parish Committee.) This move is both a necessity based on our current size, and an opportunity to reframe how we are together.

The definition of Policy Governance is that it is "a way for churches that are becoming mid-size program churches serving 250-350 members to organize decision-making and communication in ways that balance the desire for clarity and efficiency on the one hand, with the desire for community, intimacy and creativity on the other. When done well, it ensures greater transparency, more individual and collective accountability to one another and to the community's mission and goals, and maximum opportunity for creativity and connection."

Karla discussed the establishment of a new Finance Council and introduced the members, who were chosen to represent different facets of the congregation and to bring ownership of different groups into the discussion.

A motion to accept the establishment of a Finance Council was seconded and approved (not unanimously).

Sustainability: At the 2010 Annual Meeting, the Parish Committee was asked to report back to the 2011 Annual Meeting with a plan for sustainability. In response to this, the Parish Committee has established the Finance Council, who has expressed Six Guiding Principles for Sustainability:

1. Reduce and then sustain the draw on our endowment to 4.5%.
2. Each year, revenue from facilities use (rentals) that is beyond budgeted dollars will be allocated to Buildings and Grounds.

3. Following the annual meeting, pledge income beyond the goal will be used to reduce the draw from the endowment. Once we have reached a sustainable draw, income beyond the annual pledge goal will be added to the endowment.
4. Create a reserve fund for Buildings and Grounds.
5. With Buildings and Grounds, develop a 20-year plan to repair and maintain our facilities.
6. Continue to be a UU “fair compensation” and “fair share” congregation.

FY 2011 Budget: The 2010-2011 Budget Notes (pg 46-47 of Annual Report) were reviewed, in light of the Six Principles, by Karla. It was noted that detailed discussions had been held at an earlier congregational meeting held expressly for that purpose.

Other comments:

- Capitol Campaign – A UUA consultant is being hired (paid through the Parish Committee Contingency Fund) to help with a feasibility study addressing the need for and probability of success of a capitol campaign before our 300th anniversary in 2017.
- The Parish Committee has asked Buildings and Grounds to put together a twenty year plan.
- David Hawkins was recognized and thanked for his work on maintenance and revitalization of the organ.
- It was noted that there is no reference to the Stained Glass Committee. It is difficult to get grants for this restoration work and one necessity is to show a widespread support of the congregation for the windows.
- There was a question regarding the transfer of our endowment management to the UUA endowment fund, to assure that the fund practices socially responsible investing. Rev. Jim answered that all investments made by the endowment fund are carefully screened against our UU values.
- Keith Kirchoff is working on a proposal for a new sound system, and also for a link so that the service can be heard remotely through the website.

A motion to accept the FY2011 Budget was made, seconded and approved by voice vote.

Diversity Team report: Pat Bartels, Parish Committee liaison, introduced Charles Fuller, co-chair of the Diversity Team. Charles referred to the Diversity Team as a microcosm of our larger community, with issues in all areas of race, class, culture and multi-generationalism. The team has spent their first year in introspection (despite a perceived push to “produce” something).

Next year, they will take on the writing of a charter, facilitation of dialogs for the congregation, and the addition of more members.

Barbara Simonetti commented that there are still many issues of accessibility – affecting our multigenerationalism – which are being ignored. Where do we have that conversation?

Stained Glass Window report: Sheila Hussey reiterated the need for a show of support from the entire community as a prerequisite for applying for a grant to preserve our stained glass windows. We are thus far falling short of procuring the funds necessary for preservation, despite the fundraisers that were held this past year.

Action: This subject will be put on the agenda of the Parish Committee for discussion.

Social Action Issues: Gail Schoenbrunn, Social Action co-chair, presented the current issues being addressed by the congregation, with the leadership of Social Action Forums: Standing on the Side of Love (GLBT rights and immigration), Economic Justice, Environment Initiative, Food Mindfulness. She asked for affirmation from the Annual Meeting for the activities being undertaken. Specifically, in the area of immigration, she asked for affirmation to sign on to a letter of concern regarding Secure Communities and to join the Boston New Sanctuary Movement.

Action: The members attending the Annual Meeting affirmed the work of the Social Action group on behalf of the congregation.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 pm with the singing of “We’ll Build a Land.”

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Smith

Clerk of the Parish

CO-MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012

Dear Ones,

We are living in interesting times and as the Chinese fable suggests, our current reality “might be good...might be bad.” Our country is polarized between liberal and conservative orthodoxies. The interconnected web of the global economy is unpredictable. Notions of “wealth,” “success,” and “community” are being redefined in this postmodern, post-industrial era.

Our call as Unitarian Universalists, in the liberal religious tradition, continues to be relevant despite the changing cultural context. Our faith community exists for the purpose of transforming ourselves on behalf of the work of love and justice beyond these walls. Our ground of our faith, as expressed by John Buehrens in an interfaith program here at FPB, challenges and sustains us. He shared the liberal principles defined by UU theologian, James Luther Adams, in reverse order:

- 5) None of us yet knows enough to be justified in an ultimate pessimism. Hope survives. Therefore we are saved by faith, which, as scripture says, “Is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things unseen.” (Hebrews 11:1)
- 4) Yet we deny what JLA called “the immaculate conception of virtue,” as though any of us could become good simply by thinking ourselves good; instead, we believe in the necessity of the social incarnation the good we profess to love. As Gandhi put it, “be what you want to see.”
- 3) That is, we assert a moral obligation, inherent in the light which shines within every human who comes into this world, to direct one’s life effort toward a greater enlightenment of all, toward what Dr. King called ‘the Beloved Community,’ toward the Commonwealth of God – still to come yet already present here among us, wherever true I-and-Thou relations prevail.
- 2) Such relations do not depend upon erasure of differences, or coercion. They happen, by grace, only when mutual respect makes mutual transformation possible.
- 1) And finally, such relations are possible only when and where, as in this series, those who come together, however guided by the traditions of revelation that have guided and shaped their communities in the past, are also open to new understanding, provided in the encounter. i

These are the principles your ministers will bring to this work of living in covenant in a time of uncertainty. This is the faith that will sustain and shape this community as we complete and affirm our nearly eight year co-ministry, engage generative questions together, fashion a new and larger web of relationships, and walk together, “delighting for love to abide in our midst.”

In our last Annual Report of 2011, we observed:

“...this congregation has defied death by complacency. . . This is a congregation finding its way into an exciting future. Diversity is breaking into our world in so many ways, whether we want it to or not, we are learning to deal with more diverse ethnicities, socio-economic conditions, and generations here. We are inviting newer and younger folks to help us re-imagine how we do things together in this community. ‘

As we reflect on the past church year from that point of view, we can celebrate:

1. Increasing engagement with young adults, who are bringing new vision to our teams, a faith-filled expression of commitments to justice, a hope for the future, a capacity for vulnerability, and an ability to self-organize. Their presence with us challenges the “boomers” to let go of the center by mentoring, witnessing, and learning;
2. A renewed and renewing ministry to families with young children;
3. Increasing linkage between elected leaders and the larger community in well attended congregational conversations led by the Parish Committee and the Religious Exploration Committee.

4. Renewed energy in worship, with a diversity of music, a theologically rooted language of reverence, and increased participation by all generations.
5. A shared awareness that our governance needs to be “under construction” as we discover the consequences of rapid growth in a culture shaped by new forms of communication.
6. Being a learning community for candidates for UU ministry. We have held Robin Barraza as she has taken risks and held her accountable to the highest standards of ministry. We have been learning to stretch with her.
7. A robust and focused social action agenda of study and action in the areas of diversity, immigration, sustainability, and economic justice.
8. A capacity for holding the tension and anxiety of two sabbaticals and ministerial transition. Right relations, a trust in the leadership as they have discerned a process for discernment, and a capacity to ask for help from our Association, have resourced us in these uncertain times;
9. A strong staff team that hold themselves accountable to the priorities of the congregation: multicultural/multigenerational competence; faith formation; shared ministry and empowerment; in a culture of compassion; and growing capacity for teamwork in all areas of congregational life.
10. Welcoming Rebecca Keller Scholl, our new Director of Religious Exploration, with a thorough search process, a system of support, a clarity of staff-committee roles and responsibilities;
11. A strengthening of the data and financial systems;
12. A thorough and community building process for addressing Sunday morning space challenges.
13. An increased awareness of the expanding culture of care, with the increasing capacity of our Pastoral Associates.
14. Responsible stewardship of our building and grounds;
15. And a process, going forward, that will inform and empower the elected lay leaders to hold the congregation and ministers accountable to a renewed vision and mission.

Rev. Martha will spend the remainder of this calendar year reflecting on and communicating her theological and practical insights from of her 17 years in professional ministry while saying a sad good-bye to the people of this congregation. Rev. Jim will be re-integrating with the congregation bringing his sabbatical insights and transformations. Together, we will be reflecting and communicating on how co-ministry has served the congregation’s and our own transformation. T.S. Elliot will inform our transition:

*What we call a beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.*

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Martha Niebanck & Rev. Jim Sherblom

REPORT OF THE PARISH COMMITTEE
Congregational Year 2011-2012

This year the members of the Parish Committee have been:

Class of 2012

Janet Britcher, vice-chair
Ray Wellbaum, treasurer
Greg Buckland (serving remainder of Pat Bartels term)

Class of 2013

Chip DeWitt, chair
Julie Horvath
Ann Gilmore (serving remainder of Meg Coward term)

Class of 2014

Ryan Kim
Jeremy Schwab, clerk
Anya Thomas

Reverends Martha Niebanck and Jim Sherblom regularly attended the monthly Parish Committee meetings, except that Rev. Jim did not attend during his spring sabbatical.

June Orientation and Planning Retreats - The Parish Committee had a number of new members. We held two meetings with them in June where we discussed the basic governance documents, church governance and committee structure. The Parish Committee then spent a day and a half in retreat with the ministers discussing the concept of policy governance and the role of the Parish Committee in the governance of the church. The focus of our work was imagining our future in 2017 and then looking backwards to 2011 and discussing what we did in 2011-2012 that enabled the changes we imagined in 2017. The result was a Futures Protocol that described our vision for 2017 and the steps we may take in this year to help move us toward that vision.

Governance - We drafted a covenant for how we wanted to conduct ourselves in our meetings using Erik Wikstrom's ***Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as Spiritual Practice*** as a reference on the spiritual nature of our work. Meg Coward who was elected to the Parish Committee for the term ending in 2013 decided to move out of town in the summer leaving a vacancy on the Parish Committee. We appointed Ann Gilmore to fill her seat. We implemented the change approved by the congregation in the 2011 Annual Meeting of electing the treasurer and the clerk from members of the Parish Committee. Previously, the practice had been to name officers separate from the Parish Committee. We feel the change was beneficial.

As part of that transition and our continuing move toward policy governance, the ministers and staff assumed the responsibility for managing our accounting and financial functions with oversight by the treasurer. We drafted an alcohol policy governing serving alcohol at church functions and the need for obtaining permits and securing appropriate insurance.

Sustainability - We continued the commitment to move toward sustainability. At every monthly meeting, the treasurer reviewed our progress on meeting the budget approved by the congregation. It appears that we will have exceeded our revenue and expense projections for the 2011-2012 church year.

We had a discussion with Melinda Maryniuk on her efforts in the annual pledge drive. We heard from Sheila Hussey who reviewed her grant proposal for a contribution to the restoration of our stained glass windows.

We had several discussions on the need for a capital campaign in order to become financially sustainable. We reviewed the twenty year capital program drafted by the Building and Grounds Committee, which lists the building projects that will be required to keep our building safe and in good repair. Our discussion and a review of our budget requirements demonstrated that the current or anticipated levels of pledges were not sufficient to meet our capital needs. We thus agreed that we should undertake a study to assess the feasibility of a capital campaign. We met with the chairs of the capital campaign, Jane Hoey and Karla Baehr, coordinated with the Finance Council and prepared a joint presentation for the November 6, 2011 congregational meeting. Ultimately, we decided to postpone the start of a capital campaign because of the engagement process described below.

We worked with the ministers and the Finance Council to prepare the budget presented to the congregation for approval in the 2012 Annual Meeting. Under our process, the ministers, as chiefs of staff, presented an outline of the budget parameters in our March meeting. We discussed the preliminary results of the annual pledge drive in our April meeting. The ministers then made a first draft of the budget for presentation to the Finance Council in April. The Parish Committee then discussed and approved the proposed budget that was presented to the congregation.

Congregational Engagement - We spent the most time this year on addressing the change in ministerial leadership. Reverend Martha informed the Parish Committee in November that she was resigning as co-minister. The Parish Committee approved the resignation effective at the end of 2012. The term of the co-ministry terminates upon the resignation. Reverend Jim agreed, consistent with the contract for the co-ministry, to serve as minister through the end of the 2012-2013 church year. He also expressed his desire to be called as the minister.

We reviewed our bylaws and the UUA guidelines on the selection of ministers and consulted and met with Reverend Sue Philips, our District Director. As a result, we understood that the congregation must approve the call of Reverend Jim. We also realized that the selection process was an opportunity for a deep religious experience if done correctly. We met the congregation on January 8 to explain our thinking and the process for addressing the change in our ministry.

We created the Congregational Engagement Committee to create and manage the engagement process that would lead up to the ministerial decision. We drafted a charge for the committee that laid out its mission, the values explicit in its work, its relationship to the Parish Committee, the ministers and the congregation with timetables for its work. Its charge is to organize a process that provides members with the intellectual and spiritual wherewithal to make this decision in a way that becomes a religious experience for those who participate. We created criteria for selection of members of the committee based on the UUA guidelines, which were discussed with the congregation.

Members of the Congregational Engagement Committee are:

Karla Baehr, Chair	Jody Leader
Ethan Brackett	Corey Thomas
Steve Davis	Gene Thompson-Grove
Susan Larrabee	

The committee has begun its organizational meetings and expects to begin its work with congregation after the Annual Meeting.

It has been an interesting year for the Parish Committee. We spent large amounts of time on the engagement process and had wonderful and deep discussions on our future. As chair, I have had the pleasure of working with a group that grappled with big questions for which we are all better. Special thanks to Janet, who served as vice chair and was my rudder as I learned on the job.

On behalf of the Parish Committee,
Chip DeWitt, chair

AFFILIATE MINISTER

In March of 2011, the ministers, the Parish Committee and the Committee on Ministry and I finalized an agreement describing my relationship to the congregation and colleagues – that of affiliate minister. As a community minister whose calling is to offer spiritual care and guidance to animal caregivers, I now do so with your affirmation and support.

I first preached at First Parish wearing my new affiliate's hat on May 1, 2011, and a number of people in the congregation seemed to resonate with the message of taking our seventh principle to heart, beginning with considering the role of companion animals. This year I preached at FPB on January 8th, offering to more deeply explore human-animal relationships from a theological and scientific basis. (In the past year I have also preached about this seventh principle ministry at First Church in Boston, in Hubbardston, Sudbury, Melrose, and Haverhill.)

Beginning in the fall I've led monthly Pet Loss Healing Circles at FPB, and one at the Framingham church. The average attendance has only been three but those who come are very appreciative of having a safe place to grieve and share their stories.

Through April I led monthly All Creatures Worship services in Pierce Hall, complete with fellowship time; these services were fun, and music was often provided, once by a local veterinarian/pianist and another by the First Church drummers. The average attendance has been about six human beings and 6 canine beings, all of whom behaved well. In addition, I led a blessing of the animals last October.

In January and again in March I facilitated "Animals Are Us, Parts I and II" a theological and ethic exploration of our relationships and bonds. Eleven people signed on for part one, including some folks from our JP church and some seekers. We enjoyed the readings and discussions and questions so much that I offered part two.

Most recently I led a workshop for animal caregivers in at The Center in Westwood, a wellness center. Eleven people, including a vet, vet techs, shelter workers and pet owners attended; feedback was very positive, and an article about it by Bella English appeared in the Metro West section of the Globe on Easter Sunday.

To date I have had over half a dozen individual clients, mostly local. I participate in the Brookline interfaith clergy group, which is also supportive, and have had posts in Brookline.com, as well as on my website at www.animalcarerev.com.

I've attended a workshop on being with the dying offered by two Buddhist chaplains at Upaya Zen Center this past month, as well as several webinars on grief and compassion fatigue.

Launching this ministry has been wonderful, challenging, spiritually enriching and fulfilling. I couldn't have done it without the moral support and public platform that this congregation and its ministers have so generously offered me. I am very grateful, and uplifted.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Eliza Blanchard
5/1/12

AUCTION 2011

Committee: Festival of Love

Chair: Anne Harvey Kilburn

Members and/or regular attendees: Joellen Hawkins, Marian Kennedy, Elizabeth King, Carol Spitzer, Barbara Simonetti, Charles Sandmel, Fiona Lovell-Horning

Purpose/Mission Statement: Planned and executed an event, "The Festival of Love, including silent auction as a fundraiser for FPB

Accomplishments: Auction held on October 22, 2011. Proceeds in excess of \$17,000 after expenses

Tasks:

Thanks to all who helped set up, decorate, clean up, donated goods and services to be auctioned, brought food, sold tickets, handled all the accounting for the auction including resolution of the bidders and items, provided wonderful music, served food, served wine, helped with publicity, solicited items, donated items, managed and personed the close-out of the auction.

Major helpers included Joellen Hawkins for her unending support throughout the entire process; Carol Spitzer and Fiona Lovell-Horning, for festive, beautiful decorations; Jean DeBenedictis for her graphic design skills; Sonya Abbott for keeping in mind details that no one else can keep in mind!; the Social Action group for clean-up; Michael Monroe and Lisa Underhill for their extraordinary help with all the details behind the scenes managing the auction details; Jody Leader, for soliciting many Brookline businesses for awesome auction items; April Trussell-Smith and Tim Trussell Smith for donating their bartending skills; Ed Loechler, Pat Bartels, Matt Laurence, Eric Matthews for the fantastic live music; Don Kilburn for his groovy DJ skills; Ellie Boynton, for spearheading our intent toward an online silent auction; Marian Kennedy for her magnificent Excel skills; Elizabeth King, for her overall help; FP Committees who donated awesome baskets for the basket raffle; everyone and anyone who showed up to help set up the day of the auction; Barbara Simonetti and Charles Sandmel for their ideas and encouragement; the folks who helped with close-out of the auction; general help from Jen Guillemin, Frank Peace and Brian for all the help with set up, clean up, and making sure that Pierce Hall, Lyon Chapel, and the hallways, bathrooms and kitchen were back in order for Sunday morning. Thanks also to friends of FPB members with no direct FPB connections who came to the auction, brought food, donated items, and supported our efforts. Lastly, thanks to anyone that this chair has forgotten.

We will need someone to chair the auction for Fall 2012. This chair can help but not lead in 2012.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Report to First Parish in Brookline Annual Meeting May 2012

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 Sonya Abbott - ably supported by custodians Frank Peace and Brian Doucette – work together with us.

The year in review

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

- The largest expense was the replacement of the gutters on Pierce Hall (\$32,800) – Clint, Sam, Will
- Painting of the wooden exterior trim for the first time in at least a decade (\$10,450) – Liz
- Sanctuary flooring: replacing dozens of tiles and refinishing the entire floor (\$4,735 so far for tiles) - Hank
- Tree trimming for safety and roof/gutter protection (\$2,645) – Clint
- Separating the Ladies Room from the adjacent room (\$2,574) – Hank
- Sump pump for Pierce basement (\$2,100) – Hank
- We have continued with several projects to meet the twin goals of reducing environmental impact and saving money:
 - Installing new very low-flow toilets in the Ladies Room and Men’s Room, a new sink in the Ladies Room and a very low-flow urinal in the Men’s Room (\$3,383). This project has reduced our water usage considerably. – Clint
 - Storm windows in the rest of the Parish House (\$2,480) – Hank
 - Insulating most of the Parish House attic (\$1,986) – Hank
 - Replaced two problematic lights in the Sanctuary apse with LEDs (\$1,905) – Sam

The FY12 B&G was still at a reduced \$40,000. However, this was supplemented by the movie rental (\$33,000) and a matching grant from New Generation Energy for our environmental projects (\$7,000) for total new funds of \$80,000. We would like to thank the Social Action Committee for supporting the NGE grant.

Regarding the Tower, we continue to monitor of the crack gauges and condition. We remain committed to restoring the entire tower as soon as possible, but funding for this remains an open issue. In the meantime, we are having our historic masonry contractor, Consigli Construction, conduct a spot pointing campaign (est. at \$8,000), which should be completed by the Annual Meeting.

We renewed our membership with Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light, which provides us with advice on green projects as they have in the past.

Finally, we would like to recognize and thank Liz Martin for over two years of service as co-chair.

Upcoming

We are guided by a long-term plan and hope to address our deferred maintenance. Our next year’s budget will be raised to \$60 thousand, which is still lower than the budgets prior to the recession. In addition to the regular maintenance, we hope to address safety, accessibility, and green projects.

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 & Will Spears, Co-Chairs
Ed Ambrose
Tim Dailey
Sam Dennis
Liz Martin
Hank Reisner

BUILDING OPERATIONS **2011 - 2012**

According to the budgeted line items Building Operations encompasses the recurring daily operating expenses throughout the year from insurance to ground maintenance, fuel oil, snow removal, unplanned repairs, utilities etc and for the fourth year now the oversight for all of this has fallen on the Parish Administrator's shoulders along with the support of the Buildings and Grounds committee.

Everyone works very hard - in particular Frank Peace and Brian Doucette. They are of tremendous help and assist with maintaining First Parish as a welcoming, pleasant, friendly and safe building open to not only its members, but the public at large even though at times it is a never ending battle against uncontrollable odds. Hoping everyone finds the time to thank them in person for their behind the scenes continued assistance.

But there are a few select others and this year I'd really like to thank:

- **Hank Reisner** ... who do I call when a wall needs to be built, or a stairway blocked off, a room painted or a sanctuary floor repaired. Who also attend meetings, researches endlessly all with a total sense of calmness ... Hank comes to our rescue time and time again. Thank you.
- **Clint Richmond** ... who calls to remind me to turn off the roof heating coils, coordinates tree trimming, oversees ongoing roof repairs and tower maintenance. Attends meetings, reviews financial expenditures and tries to make the box perfect... Clint loves this building and wants our best foot put forward all the time. Thank you.
- **Sam Dennis** ... **Will Spears** ... **Liz Martin** ... they too attend meetings, track down vendors, seek quotes, oversee installations, give needed support when called. They too try to make the box perfect. Thank you.

So many help maintain First Parish ... besides those listed above ... to you all my heartfelt thanks ... I truly couldn't do it without you. We are all part of a village that quietly works behind the scenes keeping First Parish a welcoming building and alive. I certainly could not accomplish any of the tasks without all of you.

Gratefully submitted,
Sonya Abbott
Parish Administrator

CANVASS REPORT

May 2, 2012

This year's Annual Financial Commitment Campaign launched with an aggressive campaign goal of \$375,000. This was 7% increase from what was raised last year (\$350,000). After much consideration, it was felt to be a reasonable target primarily because last years goal (\$340,000 which was an 8% increase from the previous year was exceeded by \$10,000.

The official kick-off Sunday was March 4 and four weeks later. A "Canvass Express" table was hosted at hospitality for four consecutive Sundays. Efforts were made to reach all members and friends.

Initiatives that were done this year included:

- A staged set of communications including an "It's Coming" postcard mailed to the entire canvass list 2 weeks before canvass kick-off announcing the Stewardship campaign and key dates to remember, a canvass mailing and brochure sent out several days prior to the kick-off Sunday, a email message from Melinda sent two weeks into the campaign, and weekly announcements in the bulletin.
- A brochure that was very direct in its approach to describing costs of programs and services in the church – including stating the annual "cost per pledging unit" of approximately \$2600.
- Testimonies from members/friends (one at each service during March).
- A kick-off overview of the process delivered by Melinda held in the sanctuary but AFTER the service for 10-15 minutes (prior to hospitality).
- Three "pledge process" briefings offered to help explain the process and answer questions (child care provided and snacks offered in the mailing announcements); there were no attendees at any of the sessions.
- Dropping the process of assigning 50% of the members/friends to steward volunteers ("canvassers"). The idea of stopping the individual 1:1 visits seemed to be appreciated by most.
- Dividing up all people who had not turned in pledge cards after two weeks (approx. 100 names) into 10 volunteers, and asking them to call and leave messages to remind them to turn pledge cards in. While this was helpful, it still did not push the non-pledgers enough to turn in cards.
- A canvass express table at hospitality hour for all four Sundays in March hosted by trained canvass volunteers.
- A donor-appreciation kick-off reception for donor's contributing last year at the 2.5% level and/or at the \$4000 or greater level.
- A wrap-up celebration party was held for anyone who turned in pledge cards during the first week of the campaign. This was announced as part of the kick-off Sunday announcement (and followed with a written announcement in the bulletin).

Previous Year Comparison

	This year 2012-13	Previous year 2011-12	Two years ago 2010-11
Date data is current as of	May 2, 2012	April 30, 2011	November 2011
# of pledging units contacted	202	203	197
Dollars raised	322,272	347,248	314,000
# of Pledging Units reporting	137 (68%)	154 (76%)	163 (83%)
Avg pledge	\$2352	\$2,198	2,046
% of pledges at the 2.5% or greater level	33% at 2-3% 10% at >3%	28%	18%

Considerations for next year:

- 1) Do more messaging from the pulpit about dollars raised; numbers of pledges received (and not received). It was heard from several members and friends that there was not as much “push” this year as there was last year.
- 2) Start the messaging earlier. Do additional emails and mailings in February to get people more prepared to complete the process in March.
- 3) Have completed pledge form print outs for each member/friend at the hospitality table. Insert what was given last year. All people would have to do is sign their name and insert a new dollar figure. Rarely was a completed pledge form filled in (or mailed in). Most seemed to pick up a new form from the table.
- 4) An all church dinner / party / pot-luck to build enthusiasm.
- 5) Be more direct. Show the #'s responding and dollars raised during each service so the numbers are more clear. Have the “thermometer” displayed in a more visible location.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the many people that helped make the canvass process work:

Canvass Core Team: Jami Jordan, Jean DeBenedictis.

Reception Hosts: Kick-off party: Don and Ann Kilburn; Early Pledger Party: Alice and Coleman Mark and Anya and Corey Thomas

Phone call reminder team: Sue Andrews, Jane Hoey, Jeff Cadow, Marilyn Tressel, Sophia Johannson, Joellen Hawkins, Val Gunning, Julie Horvath, Liz Scully, and Mary Rogers.

Brochure design/graphics: Jean DeBenedictis

Canvass Express table volunteers: Jami Jordan, Julie Horvath, Ray Wellbaum, George Maryniuk, Mike Luke, and Laura Walters.

Musicians for the Gala Kick-off Sunday: Ray Wellbaum and Joe Smith (Ellie Boynton called out of town at last minute but had agreed to play as well).

Gala Sunday Food hosts: Chip DeWitt

Behind the scenes: Reverend Martha and Reverend Jim for their leadership and guidance, Sonya Abbott for helping us stay organized.

Respectively submitted,

Melinda Maryniuk and George Maryniuk
Canvass Chairs

CARING MINISTRY TEAM

2011-12

Mary McCarthy, Chair (second half of year)

Madeline Fine, Chair (first half of year)

Caring Ministry Team: Jean Ashland
Jon Hazilla
Hank Reisner
Mary Rogers

Purpose/Mission Statement: To encourage and deepen the culture of care within and beyond First Parish in Brookline

Accomplishments:

- 5 Wishes Seminar successfully given and well-attended
- December Special Service of Celebration and Remembrance
- Summer Retreat to practice listening skills and to re-new and re-evaluate our mission and goals
- Presentation to the community of the Care Box, a private way for congregants to let the ministers know of care needs
- Training with Janet Britcher on deep listening
- Living into Dying Workshop successfully presented and well-attended
- Continuing service to families in crisis with meals, rides, and a listening ear
- Received and delivered 'prayer shawls' created by knitting ministry for those in need of a gentle hug
- Leading the bi-weekly Candles of Joy and Concern
- Showed support and appreciation to those who are leaders at First Parish

Special thanks to Madeline Fine for her gentle and brave leadership during this past year, to Robin Barraza for her ministerial support, robust spirituality, and infectious laugh. Thanks, too, to all those who opened their hearts, and gave time, meals, and support. And to the anonymous knitting maven who has created the beautiful shawls.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY (CoM)

The mission of the CoM is to consider, understand, facilitate, and support the evolving ministries of First Parish in Brookline, through monthly meetings with the Ministers. Our agenda is adaptive and flexible, allowing for response to issues as they arise.

The CoM provides feedback to the Ministers, DRE and Parish Committee as they request it. We also take on specific projects throughout the year at the discretion of the committee and under the advisement of the Ministers, DRE, and Parish Committee.

A major focus this year was Reverend Martha's pending retirement and the dissolution of the co-ministry with Reverend Jim next December. The CoM thoughtfully considered and discussed the potential impact of these events on the ongoing First Parish Ministry and the congregation as a whole. UUA Guidelines, First Parish Bylaws and the Co-Ministers' contracts were all considered during our contemplation of the issues. Consideration was given to the thriving momentum within the First Parish Community, the health of the church's finances and right relations during this transitional period. As a result of this work the CoM submitted its recommendations to the Parish Committee in support of:

- Chartering a committee to engage the congregation in a participatory process of exploration and consideration of our hopes and aspirations for our ongoing ministerial team;
- Contracting with Reverend Jim for the balance of the 2012-2013 church year;
- Hosting a retirement party for Martha and a celebration of Rev. Martha and Rev. Jim's co-ministry at First Parish; and
- A congregational vote to either call Reverend Jim as our Senior Minister of our ongoing ministerial team or go into ministerial search.

Another important area of focus for this church year was to act as the Sabbatical Committee for Reverend Jim's five-month sabbatical. An on-going part of our work was to support Rev. Martha during Rev. Jim's sabbatical. We provided a sounding board her and worked to ensure a balanced workload during this time.

Other CoM conversations this year included discussions with the DRE around an enhanced policy for a Safe Congregation.

The CoM aspires to practice, promote and model right relationship and to help all members understand and live our safe congregation practices.

2011-2012: *Steve Davis, Chair; Mary McCarthy (co-chair); Reita Ennis; Jeff Cadow; Midge Wilcke; Corey Thomas; and Michael Durwin.* Our members serve for three years.

Submitted by Steve Davis for the Committee on Ministry

COMMUNICATION GROUP

Committee Communication

Chair Paul McLean (through June 2012, then vacant)

Members Ellie Boynton, Anne Harvey Kilburn, Jean DeBenedictis (through June 2012) and staff liaison Sonya Abbott

Mission Support the church's mission by 1) baring witness to our values and expressing our identity, aspirations and offerings, both inside and outside the congregation, with a clear and consistent message, theme, tone, and appearance; 2) helping attract and retain members by providing easy methods for locating desired information; 3) reducing the burden on staff and church committees by providing an easy way to address communication needs, including efforts to create, post, update and manage communication content.

Accomplishments

- Planning and establishing professional relationship with Fenway Printers for design and production of posters, brochures, and other materials
- Designing, editing and publishing Congregational Life brochure of all the church's activities over the course of a year
- Created posters for Festival of Love auction, Stained Glass/Heart & Soul dance, and The Secret Stravinsky concert
- Updating website
- Updating Facebook
- Promoting church events and sometimes organizing and producing the events (auction, etc.)

Tasks Priorities for the coming year will be recruitment of a new chair and additional members, with a focus on social networking and public relations/promotional work. Also, existing brochures and website are due for informational updating.

Thanking Rev. Martha Niebanck and Rev. James Sherblom. And especially Sonya Abbott. The Communication Group has accomplished much since its inception in Fall 2008, and Sonya has been central to that.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE TEAM

Team Members: Liz Berges, Tim Dailey, Justin Francese (vice-chair), Mark Gianino, Jami Jordan, Linda Smith (chair), Sonya Abbott (administrative liaison)

Our Mission: The mission of the Congregational Life Team is to foster meaningful engagement for a diverse group of members and friends on the path of faith formation and transformation.

Our Vision: The Congregational Life Team envisions a spiritual community where all members are able to express their spiritual gifts through meaningful, joy-filled activities that deepen connections to self, others, and our shared faith.

Our Goals:

- To manage and collect the ideas and energy of members regarding ongoing activities, courses, and special events that help us grow together, experiencing joy, challenge and commitment in this community and beyond.
- To ensure a good balance of program offerings (i.e. serving different audiences, spreading events throughout the year, and aligning events with the church calendar).
- To promote intentional partnerships and synergies among distinct groups within the church community.
- To communicate information about programs and activities in a variety of formats and to collect feedback about successes and areas for improvement.

Accomplishments:

- Published “Creating Community”, a listing of program offerings at FPB – both paper brochures and on the website.
- Attempted to understand the likes and needs of the congregation through a survey, and followed up with any ideas submitted through the survey.
- Created a Resource Packet to help planners and leaders of events and programs.
- Attempted to contact and debrief leaders of events and programs to determine successes and areas for improvement, and to let them know that their work is appreciated.
- Provided support for people with program ideas.

Tasks ahead:

- Create another listing of program offerings for 2012/13.
- Look critically at the balance of program offerings and the scheduling in the yearly calendar.
- Provide ongoing guidance, monitoring and resources to those planning and organizing events.
- Continue to collect ideas and energy of members regarding new or ongoing activities, courses and special events.

Special Thanks:

- To Jean DeBenedictis and Paul McLean from the Communications Group for their invaluable help in producing the Creating Communities brochure (on time!).
- To Janet Britcher, who, as Parish Committee liaison brought wisdom and counsel and always asked the right question.

DEACONS
Annual Report for 2011-2012

During the church year, the Deacons participated in four communion services, one of which was held as part of the Tenebrae observance in April. Also during April, the Deacons served as ushers at the memorial service for our beloved life-long First Parish member and friend, Ruth Denny Vose, wife of our late Senior Deacon, S. Morton Vose.

It is a pleasure to report that Jim Womack has been elected a Deacon by the Parish Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
William Dwyer, Senior Deacon
Chris Beasley
Sheila Hussey
Laura Walters
Midge Wilcke
Bob Williamson
Jim Womack

DIVERSITY CAUCUS **Annual Report 2012**

Co-chairs: Jody Leader & Charles Fuller (September- December)
Jody Leader & Michele David (December - current)

Current committee: Pat Bartels, Greg Buckland, Almas Dossa, Ann Gilmore, Mori Insinger, Martha Leader, Ginger Melton, Carol Spitzer, Ron Wilkinson
(*Members inactive at this time: Mike Luke, Heather Ross*)

This year the Diversity Caucus worked to:

- Continue to build understanding within the Caucus of the issues of racism at 1st Parish and in the broader community,
- investigate the potential curriculums available for us to use for a long-term Diversity educational program at First Parish next year,
- coordinate with other committees and the staff to respond to needs and opportunities that came up spontaneously,
- Present a short description of our Caucus at the January 8th Community Conversation, in preparation for a longer workshop later,
- Plan and run at least one worship service focused on the theme of diversity,
- Expand the membership of the committee in order to better represent our church community, and have more people-resources to draw from,
- Plan and run a “Community Conversation” to raise awareness about the experiences of being marginalized, as a way of talking about diversity.

--The Diversity Caucus joined forces with the 1st Parish Book Group to sponsor the reading of: The Warmth of Other Suns, the story of the great migration of African Americans out of the south and into Northern and Western cities. We then had a lively discussion with more than 20 members of 1st Parish.

--We helped Rev. Jim host a performance of ‘Fufu and the Oreos, a one-woman performance by a young African American writer and performer.

--We worked with Robin Barraza, (Intern Minister), Keith Kirkoff, (music Dir.) and Rebecca Keller Scholl (DRE), to plan and participate in the Diversity-themed service on February 5th, and the Diversity Workshop which followed the service. More than 40 members of 1st Parish attended that workshop.

--We held a day-long retreat attended by most of the committee, as a way to expand our own understanding of issues of racism, being marginalized, and possible opportunities to build a beloved community at 1st Parish. Building understanding, trust, and awareness among the Caucus members is imperative to our work.

--We worked with the UUA to try and scheduled a diversity workshop for the church leadership this spring. This is an introduction to the larger curriculum for next year and is important for creating the commitment to that curriculum before it is offered. (We have had to postpone the workshop until early next fall since the workshop leaders were not available to us on any of our possible dates.)

--We will be attending a day-long workshop on May 19, offered by the UUA District to Diversity Committees. This is a way to expand our knowledge, bring resources back to First Parish, create networks with other UU congregations, and learn from what others have done.

--We have started the planning for next year's church-wide educational programs, including part of the "Building the World We Dream About" curriculum, a movie series, and more collaboration with the Book Group. We hope to have a "1st Parish Reads" event, including a larger community conversation. Next year the Caucus will have a small budget for the first time, primarily to pay for leaders for the curriculum workshops, and any expenses associated with the film series.

FINANCE COUNCIL

Annual Report from July 2011 through April 2012

The Finance Council (FC) is organized by bringing together the chairs of committees that have significant involvement with the finances of the congregation. This year the Finance Council included: Chip DeWitt, Parish Committee; Ray Wellbaum, Treasurer; Bill Dwyer, Investments/Senior Deacon; Clint Richmond and Will Spears, Buildings and Grounds (Liz Martin, was part of the Finance Council until she stepped down as chair of B&G); Melinda Marynuik, Canvass; Karla Baehr and Jane Hoey, Capital Campaign; Reverend Jim Sherblom; Sonya Abbott, Church Administrator. Midge Wilcke chairs the Finance Council.

The six guiding principles of the Finance Council are:

- 1) Work to reduce and then sustain the draw on our endowment to 4.5% of capital.
- 2) Use excess rental income to increase our building fund reserves.
- 3) Use increases in pledge income above budget to lower endowment draw.
- 4) Maintain building fund reserves as a separate segregated bank account.
- 5) Develop a 20 year plan to repair and maintain our facilities.
- 6) Continue to be a UU *fair compensation* and *fair share* congregation.

The FC gathered six times this year meeting in July, September, October, November, January, and April. At our meetings we reviewed the monthly statements of our accounts and received updates on our investments. B&G made presentations about the On-Site Insight report, which is our twenty-year building maintenance plan, and specific reports on the tower and the roof. In addition, the FC routinely discussed financial sustainability and our progress towards that objective. We reviewed and decided upon a baseline for our B&G reserve fund, which is now a separate on-going account.

At each meeting in the early months there was discussion about a potential capital campaign. In collaboration with our efforts the Parish Committee scheduled a conversational conversation to begin a similar discussion to understand congregational priorities. The feasibility of a capital campaign was anticipated following the discovery process. In November Reverend Martha Niebanck announced her plans for retirement and it became clear that a different conversation was needed. Efforts around the capital campaign were tabled for the time being.

As this fiscal year draws to a close the Finance Council is pleased with the overall financial standing of the congregation. Should this year conclude as currently forecast we will meet or be under budget for this fiscal year. The building reserve fund has grown to meet its baseline. Since FY 2011 our annual draw on our endowment has been lowered from 8% to 6%. Our hope is to continue to reduce that over time to 4.5%.

On behalf of the Finance Council we are grateful for the trust given to us by the congregation to manage its finances. It is an honor and a pleasure to work together. We pledge to move forward in a prudent, ethical, and forthright manner always keeping the congregation's needs, both short and long term, at the center of our work.

Midge Wilcke, Chair

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE REPORT **2011-2012**

As of March 31, 2012 the value of our endowment invested with the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF) stood at \$2,556,927 (net of fees and withdrawals), and up 2.3% over a twelve month period. Although there are no perfect overall comparables for our fund given its composition (domestic and international equities, fixed income, hedge funds, cash, community investments and commodities), it is, nevertheless, estimated that the fund outperformed approximately 60% of the similarly managed funds in its broad universe. Needless to say, it is clear that other funds with different holdings for the same time period have provided better results. For example, an unmanaged fund composed of two benchmarks (weighted 60% MSCI U.S. Broad Market Index and 40% Barclays Capital U.S. Aggregate Float Adjusted Index) would have returned 8.09%. Although there is obviously a significant difference in the return on our fund vs. that of the unmanaged benchmark, it should be noted that ours provides significantly more diversification than that of the unmanaged comparison. This diversification is structured so as to have the benefit of mitigating risk during periods of market turbulence but that also means that it has the potential to reduce market returns during a period when one component of the portfolio performs strongly (e.g., domestic equities). (For more detailed information on UUCEF performance data, market reports, holdings and SRI, please log in to www.uua.org/uucef.)

It is helpful to remember the caveat commonly expressed in financial reports by asset managers: “Past performance is no guarantee of future returns.” This applies to both stellar and poor investment performance alike. Looking back over a year ago, we should remember that our goal in moving our endowment to the UUCEF in February 2011 was to maximize the return on our investment while at the same time to minimize the risk through broader diversification, all the while adhering to Unitarian Universalist values as expressed through Socially Responsible Investments. While disappointed in our endowment’s short-term performance, we nevertheless believe that over the long-term our objectives will be met.

Meanwhile, the First Parish in Brookline budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 includes withdrawals from the endowment of \$153,752 -- \$93,752 for operations and \$60,000 for capital expenditures. At this time, it appears that our withdrawal for the operations portion of our budget will be less than anticipated by fiscal year-end, another indication that we are gradually and gratefully becoming less reliant on our endowment for our everyday financial needs.

Lastly, much of what makes possible the First Parish in Brookline that we know and love today is built upon the financial foundation provided by the generosity of the many members and friends who have gone before us. It is hoped that today’s members and friends will keep this in mind and consider a donation to our endowment in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
William Dwyer
Chair, Investment Committee

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Liz Scully (chair), Jeff Cadow, Elena Garofoli, Kayla Parker and Nick Peterson

Mission: To identify and connect individuals with leadership opportunities at First Parish, to develop leadership skills in the First Parish community, and to offer support and consultation to leadership and committees. This will be done with an eye toward helping to make leadership a spiritual practice that contributes to the ongoing health and sustainability of First Parish in Brookline.

Accomplishments: The Leadership Development Committee reformed with new chair and members this year. We created a committee charter including mission, vision, and goals was created. Our charter is available upon request.

The committee provided nominations for the Parish Committee and Leadership Development Committee and consulted on Religious Exploration Committee nominations as needed.

The committee created a process for annual nominations.

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

May 2012

Music Director: Keith Kirchoff, 2010-present

The Choirs: The choral program at First Parish saw a lot of growth this year. At the beginning of the year we expanded to include five formal choirs: Cherub Choir (K-3), Junior Choir (4-5), Youth Singers (8-12), Chancel Choir (all inclusive), and Chamber Choir (selected individuals).

Cherub Choir - The Cherubs sang a total of three times this year: once in October, once in December as a part of our Christmas Pageant, and once in February. April Trussell-Smith led the choir through December, but was forced to step down due to scheduling conflicts. Liz Martin graciously stepped in as a temporary replacement and led the choir in February.

Junior Choir - Adrian Jones began the year as the Junior Choir's leader. The choir was intended to sing on the third Sunday of every odd numbered month and met for rehearsal each Sunday after service. Unfortunately, there was never a regular turnout and several rehearsals had no children. Thus, due to a general lack of interest or support, the choir disbanded before the first performance.

Youth Singers - The youth singers, led by Ed Loechler, sang on the first Sunday of every month. Meeting on Sundays after worship and on the last Friday of each month, the choir averaged roughly eight singers. The arrangements were done collaboratively with the singers and Ed. On three occasions, the Chancel Choir joined the Youth Singers.

Chancel Choir - The Chancel Choir consists of roughly 15-30 singers. All are volunteers with the exception of four paid section leaders. All singers are welcome to join, and no prior experience is required.

- Led by myself, Keith Kirchoff, this year saw some significant changes to the Chancel Choir. Most significant was the purchase of choir risers which allowed the Choir to sing from the Chancel space. We extended rehearsals to two full hours every Wednesday (as opposed to ninety minutes in previous years), and I also required a mock audition before joining in an effort to learn more about each individual's voice.
- Our repertoire throughout the year was tremendously varied; we sang gospel, spirituals, ancient classical, new classical, rock, folk, pop, Indian, African, Czech, and plainchant among other styles. The choir also began singing a choral Amen each Sunday following the prayer and meditation.

Chamber Choir - The only audition-only choir, the Chamber Choir consists of a rotating roster of eight singers. Often singing difficult and challenging repertoire, these singers must be strong sightreaders. The Chamber Choir sang on the last Sunday of each 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. Soprano Elizabeth Eyerer, alto Oriana Dunlop, and tenor Adrian Jones accepted the invitation, but due to a busy opera schedule, bass Colin Levin declined. In his stead we hired Ross Brown who was a frequent substitute singer for us last year.

Substitute Section Leaders: We have a roster of substitute section leaders for when our primary leaders have unavoidable scheduling conflicts. This year, our substitutes have included Lydia Manteufel, Brooke Larimer, Riley Vogel, Andy Papas, Ben Robinson, and Sarah Morrow.

Assistants: Adrian Jones would lead choir rehearsals in my absence, and we three different piano accompanists filled in on Sunday mornings: Pamela Kristan, David Collins, and Ellie Boynton.

Guest Musicians: Excepting Easter and Christmas (see below), all of our guest musicians have been drawn from the congregation. These have included Ed Loechler, Djems Domerson, Martha Leader, Matthew Lawrence, Landon Rose, and Jon Hazilla.

Christmas: At Christmas, the choir sang only sang works for *a capella* chorus and hired one additional singer (Steven Cosnek) to augment the tenor section.

Easter: At Easter, the choir hired Jon Hazilla's jazz trio to provide the music. In addition to Jon, these players included Jeannie Gagné (piano and vocals) and Ron Mahdi (bass).

Spring Fundraiser: On May 5th, the choir will host the church's spring fundraiser with a choral concert celebrating Stravinsky 130th birthday. Titled *The Secret Stravinsky*, the concert features four *a capella* choral selections, three song cycles, and two large-scale works with orchestra. For this concert, the choir is hiring 13 guest musicians for the chamber orchestra.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

2011-2012

Lights, cameras, actors, action and quiet on the set, not to mention transition, transition, transition, what an amazing year it has been. My seventh year with First Parish has certainly been one of the most interesting. Days are seldom ever quiet and hardly boring and it remains an interesting juggling act to deal with the many requests and demands that come in from all sorts of individuals (or the building) during the course of a day throughout the year and this past year has certainly been a prime example.

Rentals can be demanding, in particular when a movie company is involved. Old buildings can be problematic when deferred maintenance seems to be the norm. Calendars are never in sync no matter how hard one attempts to make them so. Space – never ever enough space for all the needs. Data runs wild of its own accord it seems. Lights, doors and windows have a mind of their own and seem always to be left open or unlocked. Blaming it all on the resident ghost only goes so far. It's been a year of transitions – some that worked, some that didn't. The office is constantly implementing new systems or trying it "another way". We've welcomed new employees and new members, and gently try to care for all who walk through the door. All of this definitely keeps me on my toes, for I truly never know what my day with bring.

Naturally all of the juggling wouldn't be possible if I didn't have help from so many others, in addition to which it's been a pleasure this past year to work with a few very special people:

- **Ingrid Johansson** – we all can't thank her enough for her unending dedication for spending long hours and many years handling the daily financial transactions. In the summer of 2011 we transitioned Ingrid out of her role as controller so that all financial transactions are now handled by the Parish Administrator. I can't thank her enough for all she did and continues to do.
- **Sophia Johansson** – graciously took over the handling of the Thanksgiving Feast and will soon be handling the year end Church Picnic – this is a big relief. She also helped out with some administrative tasks during the months of November and December and this too was much appreciated. Thank you Sophia and don't forget to come by for a hug.
- **Nancy Natowitz** – our newest staff member, came from heaven (well Brookline actually) to help us all. Nancy works 15 hours a week here in the church office and within her first week I knew we had a highly competent, trusted angel amongst us. Like me, most folks wouldn't get to meet her, because we are not here on Sundays, but should you be in the area on a Monday, Thursday or Friday morning, please do stop by to meet the newest member of our team.

Other staff members I have almost daily email connection with – Monday thru Friday that is and see a few times a month at staff meetings. Rebecca, our DRE I see weekly, and really appreciate working with her on many varied projects and enjoy her friendship. Besides staff though there are others who help make the workload lighter and they need to be recognized - Paul McLean and Ellie Boynton come to mind immediately, but I know there are many others that should be on this list. Actually, it is an endless list for there are many that help out all the time, very quietly and unknown - even to me, and I do so very much appreciate all that everyone does. Thank you one and all for your continued presence, kindness, assistance and wonderful spirits.

This next year will be a little sad because of Rev Martha's leaving – to you I say - I'll miss you more than you will ever realize, may your retirement be filled with only artful bliss.

Respectfully submitted,
Sonya Abbott, Parish Administrator

PROGRAM COUNCIL for 2011-12

As of May 2012

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>CHAIR(S)/Coordinators</u>	<u>CONTACT INFORMATION</u>
		<i>All are @firstparishinbrookline.org</i>
Auction 2011	Anne Harvey Kilburn	auctionchair@
Buildings and Grounds	Clint Richmond Will Spears	buildingsandgroundschair@
Canvass	Melinda Maryniuk	canvasschair@
Capital Campaign Leaders	Karla Baehr Jane Hoey	ccchairs@
Care Ministry Team	Mary McCarthy	carechair@
Committee on Ministry	Steve Davis	comchair@
Communications	Paul McLean	communications@
Congregational Life Team	Linda Smith	conglifechair@
Deacons	William Dwyer	seniordeacon@
Finance Council	Midge Wilcke	financechair@
Historic Preservation	William Dwyer	historicpreservationchair@
Investment	William Dwyer	investmentchair@
Leadership Development	Liz Scully	ldchair@
Parish Committee	Chip DeWitt	parishchair@
Personnel	Charles Fuller	personnelchair@
Religious Exploration	Ann Dinsmoor	rechair@
Social Action	Gail Schoenbrunn Clint Richmond	socialactionchair@
Stained Glass Committee	Sheila Hussey	stainedglasschair@f
Technology	Ellie Boynton	techchair@
Welcoming Team	Anya Thomas	membershipchair@
Worship	Adele Munger Mathieu	worshipchair@

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE **ANNUAL REPORT - MAY, 2012**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ann Dinsmoor, Chair
Matt Etemad-Gilbertson
Kayla Parker
Clare Reilly
Leslie Spaneas
Gene Thompson-Grove
Scott Ullrich
Laura Walters
Bob Williamson

2011-2012: a Year of Transition

Our new Director of Religious Exploration, Rebecca Keller Scholl, arrived at First Parish in Brookline August 1st, starting us off on a wonderful year of transition in professional leadership. We have spent much of the year evaluating what we are doing, determining how, when and where we do it and planning our own priorities for the future of the RE program. We have undertaken this planning in the context of goals of the larger congregation, ie, commitment to financial sustainability; engagement of more diverse ethnicities, socio-economic conditions and generations; exploration of new forms of worship and communication; and commitment to a spiritual culture of reverence, intimacy and disciplined practices of listening and contribution. (These were derived from 2010 & 2011 Annual Reports.)

The committee itself has had a successful year of transition in membership. We began the year with only three returning members (due to those cycling off the committee after three-year commitments and changes in personal circumstances). We proceeded to successfully and joyfully recruit six new members, a total of nine. At the end of this year, two are rotating off and the remaining seven will be joined by three new recruits, bringing our committee to ten members for 2012-2013. We are now a stable, cohesive, high-functioning committee with volunteers coming forward for the future! Ann plans to return for one more year, joined by Gene, serving as co-chairs.

One reason for our strength is our commitment to including spiritual practice in our time together. At each meeting we light a chalice, have a centering reading, sing a hymn, have a check-in and/or an inventive spiritual practice activity led by Rebecca, and close by saying “thank you for helping us do together what we cannot do alone” and often singing *Amen* – all very brief, because there is much to get done to be sure programs and engagement are developing as we hope and intend.

We supported Rebecca in the early months of her entry as she undertook a careful review of the program, policies and practices. As she reviewed existing policies and drafted new ones where needed, we offered opinions and approval as appropriate. We have clarified and made more specific the roles and responsibilities of the DRE in relation to the RE Committee, its members, other volunteers and other staff. Among the more visible Sunday responsibilities of Committee members have been weekly greeting at the back stairs to welcome new families and leaving the sanctuary when children are sung out to assist children in finding their classes and to be certain there are two adult teachers in every class (our Safe Congregation policy).

RE enrollment has grown tremendously this year, up from 110 last year to 132 this year. By UUA standards, our program now fully warrants a full-time DRE position instead of the current three quarter time position. However, while some new administrative support has been available this year and is planned for next year, the budget for next year will not support increased DRE time. The RE Committee is striving to identify the most important programs to sustain and/or initiate, develop links to the work of other committees, and expand commitment of parents and others to a “cooperative model” of RE programming. In a further effort to make a three quarter position workable, next year we intend to engage many additional volunteers to assume responsibilities for each RE class and for special projects, freeing-up RE Committee members to engage in more strategic planning. We see this as critically important, doubly so in a year of change in ministerial staffing.

This year the RE Committee evaluated our current programming and examined data about growth in enrollment. We researched a variety of models of RE programs and reached a few important conclusions.

1. The Nursery program for our youngest children, with two paid staff for continuity and many smiling, singing volunteers, is highly effective, much appreciated. We recommend FPB members take a peek at 12⁺ smiling, swaying-to-the-music, busy toddlers, all in one room with loving, competent early childhood enthusiasts!
2. We remain committed to the magic of the Spirit Play curriculum for young children (the current class has pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grade 1).
3. Both the Nursery and Spirit Play are over-crowded. Next year we plan to alleviate the crowding by adding a Preschool class, taking the oldest from Nursery and the youngest from Spirit Play to form a new group.
4. We will update curricula for grades 2-6, in part because children in grades 2 and 3 are grouped together, as are children in grades 4 and 5; they will need new material. In the future we may want to update the structure of the programs for grades 2-6.
5. We want to continue our commitment to a three year Coming of Age Program encompassing neighboring Faiths (World Religions) for grade 7, Our Whole Lives (OWL) for grade 8, and Challenge (Rite of Passage – Faith Discernment) for 9th grade. However, this year, 6th and 7th graders have been together in Neighboring Faiths, because of low enrollment in these two grades. We have determined that the group should remain together for another year of community building rather than advance to OWL next year. They will, instead, have a new age-appropriate curriculum and be ready for OWL the following year. Consequently, we plan to fine tune the curriculum for both Neighboring Faiths and OWL next year and reintroduce them in the fall of 2013.
6. We plan to continue Challenge for grade 9 and the steadily-building High School Youth group for grades 10-12.
7. In order to add a Preschool class, we will need an additional classroom since all classroom spaces are currently being used on Sunday mornings. To address this need, we plan to move all youth programming, grade 7 and up, to a different time, eliminating such heavy concurrent programming on Sundays at the 11:00 hour. The chosen time, following input at a meeting with parents on April 28, is 12:45 on Sundays. We plan two-hour time blocks on alternate weeks (or twice a month). The longer time blocks on alternate weeks will improve the programs and potentially ease demands on family time.
8. An additional reason for moving youth programs to a different time is to make a youth program available on Sunday mornings to visitors and new families. Both OWL and Challenge are “closed” programs, meaning that young people cannot “drop in” or enroll mid-way. If OWL and Challenge are offered Sunday afternoons as they have been in the

past and are in some other UU churches, then youth will be available Sunday morning for other activities and programs that can accommodate visiting youth and new members' young people.

9. We plan for youth, grades 7 and up, to attend 11:00 Sunday worship services or, alternatively, to receive some training and commit to working regularly with younger children. To make the 11:00 services more accessible to young worshippers, we support additional multi-generational services that limit listening time blocks to not more than 10 minutes with a variety of active engagement and participation in between. Additionally, on Sundays without multi-generational services, we will offer a brief 10-15 minute orientation before the service and a brief 5-10 minute summary of the experience at the end, provided by trained lay volunteers. We may call this guide to worshipping, "POW WOW", for Probe of Worship and Wisdom of Worship.
10. The RE Committee has been grappling with the reality that Sunday classes, if attended every session in a year, offer a child or youth only 22.5 hours of religious exploration! This means that actually parents are children's primary religious educators. In order to better support parents in their role, one group for parents of teens is already planned for next year and we will be looking for volunteers to help organize additional parents' groups.

We are excited about and proud of our growth but humbled by both the challenges and opportunities of responding to a growing number of families and space constraints. We are concerned about the rapidity of change precipitated by the growth and space limitations, and will continue to seek feedback, suggestions, patience and support as we continue to lead the RE program. We invite everyone in the First Parish community to speak in your own voice and join us in this endeavor.

Faithfully submitted,
Ann Dinsmoor
RE Committee Chair

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is hard to imagine that a year has passed since I was introduced to the congregation at the 2011 annual meeting. Looking out at the blur of new faces in Lyon Chapel, I wondered how I would ever learn your names, let alone get to know you. Now, I can not imagine it has only been a year. The welcome I received was so warm and supportive, and I have grown to love and appreciate this amazing congregation.

The summer was filled with learning the ways this church functions, and I am so grateful for the patience and support of Rev. Jim and Rev. Martha, Sonya, Keith, April, Robin, Frank and Brian. This staff team made it easy to acclimate and I was impressed by how receptive everyone was to questions and ideas. Time and thoughtfulness in creating a highly functioning group has certainly paid off, and I am grateful to be part of such an invigorating staff team.

At the end of August the Religious Exploration Committee met for the first time and I realized how incredibly fortunate I am to have joined this incredible group of dedicated volunteers. I have never met such a capable, committed, caring, organized and highly functioning committee. If you have been at church on the second Monday night of the month, then you have surely heard the laughter coming from the Peterson Lounge, you may have heard the music, and possibly witnessed the scribbling on sheets of paper posted on the walls or talking quietly in breakout groups. What you might not see from a distance is the creativity, enthusiasm, support and faithfulness. The level of respectful discourse and engaged planning is inspiring.

Under the skillful guidance of Ann Dinsmoor as the chair, the RE Committee has accomplished a great deal, and truly created a Ministry of Faith Formation. Matt Etemad-Gilbertson, Kayla Parker, Clare Reilly, Leslie Spaneas, Gene Thompson-Grove, Scott Ullrich, Laura Walter, Bob Williamson have addressed strategic planning, problem solving, group education, congregational connections and engagement, curriculum evaluation, space creation and reallocation, teacher recruitment, greeting, cross committee connections, multigenerational worship support and so much more. This is an energized and amazing group of individuals who come together as a committee in faith and love. I am truly grateful to have the opportunity to work with each and every one of you.

When the Church year started in the fall, the solemn quiet of the empty church was transformed from that first Sunday. It was not until the children arrived that I fully appreciated this congregation. Since then, it feels like a whirlwind on non-stop activity, learning and growth. The RE program has grown 20% this year alone, and we are bursting at the seams. The greatest increase has been in the Nursery and we are so fortunate to have Chrissy Aldrich and Emma Wellbaum, our paid Nursery Staff, who, along with an incredible group of volunteers, provide loving care to our youngest children.

Each of our classes are led by wonderful and caring volunteer teaching teams, who give so much of themselves to support this congregation and make our classes truly welcoming and fun for all. Most importantly, the 62 volunteers who have worked the children and youth this year have provided a supportive community in which our children and youth may explore their faith in community.

One way our teachers are successful is by always putting the children and community first - because this is what our young people deserve. These children and youth are so amazing - filled with joy and curiosity, carrying their own sorrows and challenges, arriving with smiles and laughter or petulant teenage glares - each is a gift in their own way. Being able to journey with them as they discover and develop their beliefs, and begin to live into their faith is an honor and a privilege. I look forward to the future and working with this congregation as we continue to support faith formation, social justice work and connection to this community and all of humanity.

Faithfully submitted,
Rebecca Keller Scholl

SOCIAL ACTION

Co-Chairs: Gail Schoenbrunn and Clint Richmond

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

Our Actions: We are first inspired by the Seven Principles of our Faith. In the face of so much need, we reaffirmed our focus into four thematic initiatives. We also strive to build upon and integrate with the efforts of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UUMassAction Network, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry. Our initiatives are **Standing on the Side of Love, Economic Justice, Environment Initiative, Food Initiative.**

Standing on the Side of Love

- **We fought HIV and AIDS** at the Harbor to the Bay bike ride from Boston to Provincetown. Team First Parish, 7 riders and 10 pit crew of all ages, raised nearly \$10,000 in this all-volunteer, grass roots fundraiser. We rode, we made snacks and we ran a pit stop, all under the fearless leadership of Linda Smith, Ethan Brackett and Bijan Etemad-Gilbertston. Next year's ride is September 17th.
- **We continued to educate ourselves about immigration.** The Immigration Committee continued to make strides on this important issue and explore ways we might make a difference in the future. First Parish affirmed the decision to join Boston New Sanctuary at the annual meeting, which has included attending monthly gatherings, a special workshop and a vigil at the Suffolk County Detention Center. The group hosted Saliagua, a special interactive, multi-generational dramatic learning experience in January. 25 community members participated. In addition, several members are committed to attending the UU General Assembly in Phoenix this June. Called Justice GA, the spotlight is on Immigration. Special thanks to Linda and Jack Smith for organizing our Immigration efforts this year.
- **We walked in witness and support.** We raised over \$1051 for Project Bread's Walk for Hunger, which provides critical resources for hungry children and families in Massachusetts. Thanks to Michele David for organizing us. In June, we look forward to the Boston Aids Walk June 3rd and with renewed energy from RE and the Youth, for Boston Pride Parade on the 9th.
- **We began a new multi-generational service opportunity at Goddard House.** Many thanks to Ann Harvey Kilburn, Dorothy Richardson and Barbara Simonetti for getting these gentle visits with the appreciated residents started. Open to kids and at least one parent.

Environment Initiative

- **We continued to work toward lower carbon footprints.** We educated ourselves at Clint Richmond and Suzanne Federspiel's solar house tour, featuring their new 6.1 kW solar photovoltaic system and delicious organic refreshments.
- **We dedicated our Environment Initiative Special Collection to 350.org and ACE.** We split the collection of \$502.25 in half to support the work one global organization (350.org) and one local organization, Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE).
- **We carried the First Parish banner at Moving Planet: New England,** the September rally to move beyond fossil fuels led by 350.org. Thanks to Clint Richmond and Reita Ennis for organizing us.

Food Initiative

- **We incorporated our food mindfulness to our community-wide Thanksgiving feast.** Bringing the congregation together for a mindful and spiritual feast that included chemical-free turkeys from a small local farm locally and organically grown apples and vegetables in addition to the foods brought by all. Thanks to the passionate leadership of Sophia Jay and Jack Smith.
- **We helped organize the end-of-year picnic** with an eye to mindful foods, local farming and healthy choices for our bodies and our planet.
- **We dedicated our Food Initiative Special Collection to Renewal House.** Donating \$1060 as a congregation to the women and children of this domestic violence shelter, along with seven boxes of vegetable and apples for their Thanksgiving meal. Sharing in beloved community.

Economic Justice

- **We prepared and served lunch to the homeless** at St. Francis House working shoulder-to-shoulder with their wonderful kitchen staff on five Saturdays. 16 individuals volunteered over 4 Saturdays. Many thanks to Jami Jordan for organizing these efforts.
- **We continued our commitment to the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury.** We end the year with special appreciation to Eliza Blanchard for her work with the after-school tutoring program and Val Gunning with Renewal House, the UUUM Domestic Violence Shelter.
- **We continued to explore Jericho Road Roxbury,** in partnership with the UUUM. We surveyed the congregation for skills, interest and possible financial support and helped the leadership committee explore the needs of community-based nonprofit organizations in neighboring Roxbury. This transformative social justice project has powerful potential to be a congregation-wide, live-changing long-term commitment for First Parish. We are working toward to a Fall launch. Thanks to Jami Jordan and Gail Schoenbrunn for representing us on the JRR leadership team.
- **We supported Occupy Boston.** A kitchen full of adults and youth made a dozen apple pies one Saturday afternoon in October and then delivered them to Dewey Square. Thanks to Reita Ennis for organizing this spontaneous and joyful effort. Members of both Social Action and the Choir sang at UU Vespers, organized by Madeline Fine.
- **We sponsored Dulce.** Dulce Maria Llanos Garcia lives near Antigua, Guatemala. She is 9. Her family's income is \$104 US per month. First Parish is sponsoring her education through her high school graduation through Common Hope.
- **We made a second service trip to Guatemala.** 6 teens and 8 adults traveled as a Vision Tem to Antigua to volunteer their time and skills to Common Hope. They built an extension to an affiliated family's home, shared their professional expertise with staff, led classroom activities with children and more. They also visited First Parish's sponsored-child Dulce in her home, bringing her and her family greetings from us all. Many thanks to Anne Copeland and Jim Womack for leading this trip.
- **We donated durable foods** to the Brookline Food Pantry, redoubling our efforts around the holidays when it was clear local food banks were low on supplies. Thanks to Ed Loechler and Leslie Spaneas for delivering the donations once a month.
- **We learned about endangered languages and us.** Thanks to the entertaining and informative presentation by Dr. Sue Kalt, congregant and NSF Documenting Endangered Languages Fellow to 16 members and guests one May evening.

- **We dedicated our Economic Justice Special Collection to Common Hope**, donating \$1087.50 to this non-sectarian, nonprofit organization whose mission is to keep Guatemalan children in school.
- **We reaffirmed our ties with UU Social Action.** We joined the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and UU Mass Action as a congregation. We invited Lynn Holbein, the President of the Board of UU Mass, to come speak with us.

Our Vision: Our vision is for our congregation to live out our principles inside the church and in the wider community. And, in following our vision, that First Parish is seen as an active member of the community and a place to learn about and respond to the moral imperatives that derive from our faith. Our actions arise from the passions of our congregation. This year, over 100 members of the congregation participated in some kind of Social Action activity. And over \$6,000 was given to help the work of others.

We look forward to continuing to tap the passion of our ever-evolving congregation and hope to see everyone at First Parish in Brookline involved in making a difference in this world.

STAINED GLASS COMMITTEE

May 1, 2012

Committee Members: Susan Andrews, Jeff Cadow, Chip DeWitt, Sally Dwyer, Frank Hutchins, Skye Kramer, Sheila Hussey, Chair.

Mission Statement: The mission of the First Parish Stained Glass Committee is to educate our congregation, and the wider community, about the origin and historic and cultural significance of our unique collection of stained glass windows and raise the funds to repair, restore and safeguard them for future generations.

Year's Activities:

- Under the auspices of Tour Brookline partnered with the National Park Service to provide a tour of Olmsted's Neighborhood that attracted ninety people to visit the Olmsted National Historic Site, the Old Burying Ground, and First Parish.
- Worked with a MAD (Making a Difference) Religious Exploration class Sunday, October 9 celebrating the Angel of Peace in the Weld Memorial Window.
- Raised \$11,000 through an appeal letter sent to the congregation in November.
- Scheduled a tour of our windows led by Frank Hutchins particularly for Marilyn Justice, President, Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation.
- Submitted a Challenge grant application February 1, 2012 that focused totally on restoration of the Lowell/Whitman Window to the Cabot Family Charitable Trust.
- Facilitated the Heart and Soul dance party February 11, 2012 to benefit the Stained Glass Legacy Fund.

Tasks: Beginning in June we will review our fundraising strategies with the goal of coordinating our efforts with the Finance Council and the Parish Committee.

Thank you: A big thank you to Sonya Abbott for her administrative skills, endless patience, and ability to bring focus to a project. Thank you to Elaine Shannon who was the heart and soul of the Heart and Soul dance party, and thank you to party sponsor PALS Children's Chorus, Jill Currier, Executive Director.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Hussey

TEACHING PARISH

Committee	Teaching Parish (Ministerial Internship)
Chair	Paul McLean
Members	Karla Baehr, Charles Sandmel, Hilary Allen, Susan Larrabee
Mission	Provide support and feedback to Robin Bartlett Barraza during her one-year ministerial internship.

Accomplishments

We've been privileged to work with an extraordinary minister in process. We've served in part as a Committee on Ministry for Robin, and perhaps our greatest accomplishment has been simply to make Robin feel the congregation's support in her year of learning here. Though not yet ordained, Robin has served as the church's sole full-time ministerial presence during Rev. Jim Sherblom's sabbatical, and has enthusiastically, courageously and in myriad ways taken advantage of a learning opportunity that might easily have been overwhelming, and no doubt was at times. Teaching Parish may be the luckiest committee at First Parish.

Thanking

Rev. Martha Niebanck and Rev. James Sherblom. Special thanks to Rev. Martha for her mentorship and encouraging Robin to boldly embrace this learning opportunity, and to Robin for seeing the opportunity and taking great advantage of it, all to the benefit of the congregation of First Parish.

MINISTERIAL INTERN

Dear friends,

It is with great sadness that I prepare to leave you after a year of being your full time ministerial intern. I came to First Parish wondering if you would be much different than the congregation I had served for six years in Milton as a DRE. You were, after all, close by, filled with young families and similar in size. What I found when I arrived was an energy and commitment that astounded and inspired me. You are positive and vibrant and alive. You are committed to a ministry of welcome and diversity. Your mission stretches beyond your walls. Instead of nay-saying good ideas, people joyfully put them into action. You care for one another in tangible and ineffable ways. You are the hands and face of God to one another.

Sometimes I can't believe all that you have taught me in the short year I have been here. I leave, unambivalent about my call to the ministry for the first time in the twelve year journey I took to get here, and I have you to thank for it. You helped me to develop and hone my voice and my ministry. I take each and every one of you with me as I go on to my next step in the journey and join the staff team at First Universalist Church of Franklin as their Director of Family Ministries.

WORSHIP

I have preached and led 16 worship services this year at First Parish, a truly unique blessing for a minister-in-training. I provided worship support through readings, prayers and stories for at least 15 more. I had the moving experience of planning and co-leading worship with the diversity committee on building beloved community, and planning and co-leading a spirited multigenerational worship with the RE team and worship team on multigenerational friendship. It was particularly a joy to collaborate with Keith Kirchoff, the First Parish band, and the amazing First Parish choirs to produce high quality musical services. I led the congregation in a handwashing ritual for Rosh Hashanah, communion at Tenebrae, and a Burning of the Grudges ritual on New Year's Day. Beyond Sunday morning, I also had the opportunity to collaborate with the worship committee on Samhain service, the winter solstice service, seder dinners, and a powerful Tenebrae service.

I am grateful for the vast and varied feedback I received on my worship leadership, theology, preaching and presence. It helped me to grow in my "pulpit ministry" in ways I never thought possible. Thank you for quick receiving line feedback, phone calls, emails, facebook messages, and conversations over coffee. I took in every word—both criticism and praise—and worked to integrate it all into becoming a better, more effective minister. Thank you for allowing me to take risks, for cheering me on, allowing me to be vulnerable, laughing at my jokes and for gracefully accepting my flaws. Your trust helped me thrive in this area, and I will never forget the electric energy in the sanctuary at First Parish in Brookline. It is unique and catching.

PASTORAL CARE

I met with a number of people of all ages this year for formal and informal pastoral care. Thank you to those of you who trusted me enough to let me into your lives, and into a little piece of your spiritual journeys. Thanks especially to the gifted pastoral care associates from the care team and all the unofficial First Parish caretakers, who taught me a lot that I didn't already know about how a congregation takes care of its members. Love is a verb to you all. In particular, I want to highlight the care team's institution of a care box—a vital and quiet new way congregants can ask for pastoral care during worship as needs arrive. I have already received

opportunities to provide care for people who have used our box. Finally, I want to applaud the pastoral care team for the institution of “caring for our leaders” initiatives, and the prayer shawl ministry. Both ministries have provided meaningful and healing experiences for the people they have touched.

ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This year I had the opportunity to lead and teach a number of adult spiritual development courses and seminars including the “Five Wishes” workshop, the “Whose Are We?” workshop (both with Rev. Martha), and weekly Bible study (occasionally with Rev. Jim). I co-coordinated the “Welcoming as a Spiritual Practice” workshop with April Trussel-Smith and the Welcoming Team. I will be leading the worship team and anyone who is interested in a “Worship that Works” workshop based on the materials of Marcia McFee. I am grateful for the opportunities we have had to teach and learn from each other this year. I am especially thankful for my stalwart, strong-minded, dedicated and funny friends from my beloved Bible Study group. I think you know how much you taught me this year about integrity, leadership, new perspectives, and plumbing the metaphorical depths of ancient texts.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

This year brought a surprise opportunity for young adult ministry surfaced by the young adults themselves, who came to me asking to help them form a new group. Form a new group we did, of 20 somethings and 30 somethings, who meet bi-monthly for small group ministry. The members take turns leading the group, and would like to incorporate service to the church, regular social outings, and social action as part of their covenant. I am so impressed with this group of young people, who have deepened in their friendships and understanding of their lived theology already in the few months they have had together.

COMMITTEES

This year, I have served on the Teaching Parish Committee, the Worship Committee, the Care Team, the Congregational Life Team, and the Social Action Forum. I have provided collaboration and support to the Diversity Team, Parish Committee and the Welcoming Team, in addition. The committees at this church thrive with the lay leadership of talented, committed, and energetic folks. I have learned so much about how to run a church well from the people who serve as personnel on the leadership teams at First Parish.

CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

Perhaps the most moving and motivating experiences I had this year were in witnessing the tough and tender facilitated conversations we had following worship on Sunday mornings, most notably the conversations about race, religious exploration and multigenerational worship. In particular, I will never forget the courage, depth of sharing and passionate wishes for this church community shared during the conversations about race I co-led with the diversity team following our beloved community worship service. This is a model that all churches in our nation should follow on a regular basis...you are truly working to build the kin-dom, good friends.

TEACHING PARISH COMMITTEE

My teaching parish committee served as a committee on ministry for me this year, and I would be remiss if I did not thank them for all that they are, and all that they did for me. This group of insightful, compassionate truth-tellers are a blessing to this congregation, and most especially to my ministry. They are: Paul McLean, Susan Larrabee, Karla Baehr, Hillary Allen and Charles

Sandmel. To my dear friends: I was blessed to spend time talking about the past and future of this church, the vitality of congregational life, the anxiety of transition and the importance of being a teaching parish with truly stellar people. Thank you for being committed to the future of the Unitarian Universalist ministry. Your work matters to our denomination, and to our world. Thank you for your ministry to me and to this community.

STAFF

Finally, I was blessed to work with a talented, honest, trusting, and caring staff here in Brookline. I collaborated and worked closely with each and every staff member at one point or another. As someone who has worked in a variety of church settings, I can say without reservation that First Parish is lucky to have a collaborative, committed and mission-oriented staff. Thank you to Sonya, who keeps me on top of details like nobody's business, and cares about this congregation as if she were a member of its worshipping community. Thank you to April, who knows what it means to create radical welcome, and articulates it prophetically. Thank you to Keith, who astounds me with his talent, and the nimble and pastoral way he works with our musicians to bring outstanding varied music to this church. Thank you to sextons Brian and Frank, who always bring a smile to my face and a coffee cup to my hand in the morning. Thank you to Rebecca, who is a true colleague, an incredibly creative and warm educator with the can-do attitude I always wished I had. Thank you to Rev. Jim, who is one of the most encouraging, genuine and boisterous ministers I know.

Finally, thank you to Rev. Martha. You met with me for hours every week in supervision sessions, reflecting with me theologically, psychologically and collegially, pushing me to be better, highlighting my gifts. You are a strong pastor, a deep and embodied preacher, a brave model for right relationship with a swift wit that always lightened the seriousness of this work without diminishing it. Thank you for all that you are, and all who you were to me. Your legacy will be partly lived in the many ministers you have mentored, and I am proud to have been one of them.

I leave you with a blessing important to me from my childhood, the Gaelic Blessing:

*May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face.
May the rain fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of her hand.
Many blessings on the road ahead, good people.*

I will miss you with all of my heart,
Robin Bartlett Barraza

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
2011-2012 Annual Report

Chair: Ellie Boynton

Members: Sonya Abbott and Rev. Jim Sherblom

Mission Statement: To help the 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 2011-2012:

- Replaced DRE computer and bought new printer for upstairs office.
- Replaced main printer with networked printer.
- Added stained glass renovation blog to website.
- Provided option to purchase tickets to auction and Stravinsky concert online using PayPal

Additional work included:

- Updating existing listserv subscription lists and adding new ones when requested.
- Renewing the web hosting service and anti-virus subscription.

Goals for 2012-2013:

- Continued support of church staff and consideration of equipment upgrades and replacement.
- Continued development and updating of website to meet congregation's needs, including addition of audio recordings of sermons, online payment option for religious exploration, enhanced interactivity.
- Consider adding registration for members which would allow us to have password-protected area(s) of website

Thanks to...

- Paul McLean and Sonya Abbott, for continually updating content on the website and for support and advice.
- Jeff Cadow, for always being ready and willing to help.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ellie Boynton

TREASURER'S REPORT

Through March 31, 2012, three quarters of First Parish's current church fiscal year, we are on course to finish slightly better off financially than we projected in our FY2012 budget that was approved for this period. We benefitted from some unanticipated revenue sources including a filming "location fee" fee of \$60,000 and over \$7,000 from a matching grant program to support energy savings initiatives that was introduced to the congregation by our Building & Grounds Committee. Savings in operating expenses from the mild winter (lower heating needs and less snowplowing) unfortunately were largely offset by the rising cost of heating fuel and the need to heat the church building more frequently due to increased occupancy. Barring any unforeseen expenditures before June 30, 2012, we should end up drawing approximately \$15,000 less than had been budgeted for the year from our endowment fund to support operating needs. This brings us closer to our goal of reducing the annual draw on our endowment to a sustainable level of 4 ½%.

The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2013 (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013) is shown in the following pages. It indicates an overall approximate \$15,000 increase in both income and expenses over the FY2012 budget and reflects changes in specific income and expense lines based on projected trends in certain areas, though for the most part it closely tracks the FY2012 budget. The FY2013 budget follows the guiding principles established by our Finance Council, which include continuing to build a reserve fund for our Building and Grounds needs, and continuing our policies of being a UUA "fair compensation" and "fair share" congregation. Our biggest financial challenges remain the reduction of the annual draw on our endowment fund, (which continues to be above the sustainable goal of 4 ½%), and the need to spend substantial amounts on deferred capital projects for our church building.

Our Social Action Forum requested that some information be provided regarding how our church's banking and investment practices reflect our commitment to Social Responsible Investing values ("SRI"). Both First Parish and the UUA use Eastern Bank, an independent mutual bank headquartered in Boston, for their day-to-day banking needs. Eastern, a successor to Wainwright Bank, has a strong record in community investment, banking outreach to progressive/minority institutions, and for providing meeting space to nonprofits. First Parish enrolls our staff members who are eligible for retirement benefits in the Unitarian Universalist Organizations Retirement Plan. This is a defined contribution plan, in which participants select their own investments. TIAA-CREF, the plan manager, offers participants the opportunity to invest in its Social Fund, which is screened by MSCI, Inc. "to favor companies that meet or exceed specified environmental, social and governance criteria." First Parish's endowment assets are pooled with the UUA Common Endowment Fund ("CEF") which balances volatility/risk with expected returns and SRI values. According to its own assessment, approximately 50% of CEF's investments are screened for SRI. Screening ranges "from as little as eliminating tobacco companies, weapons and nuclear power to a fully screened portfolio that favors good corporate citizens and avoids those which are not based on UU values." The UUA sponsors shareholder resolutions and actively votes its shares at annual meetings of companies in which the CEF invests. Rev. Jim Sherblom has served on the UUA Committee on Socially Responsible Investing and on the UUA Investment Committee during the period when these policies were formulated and introduced. Though he no longer serves on these bodies, Rev. Jim remains actively involved in discussions at the UUA around how it manages our money consistent with our values and ideals. Further information about both the UUA Retirement Plan and its Common Endowment Fund may be found on the UUA website.

I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to Sonya Abbott, our Congregational Administrator, and to Rev. Jim Sherblom for their fine work in overseeing First Parish's financial matters this past year. As a "Policy Governance" church, our staff has primary responsibility for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of our finances, with active input and oversight from our Finance Council. Sonya and Rev. Jim have done an outstanding job on this. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Wellbaum

FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE
Proposed
FY 2013 Budget

	FY 11 BUDGET	FY 12 BUDGET	FY 13 BUDGET
CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT			
Pledges	295,000	347,248	355,000
Sunday Offering	12,000	17,000	17,000
Other Donations	4,000	3,000	5,000
Total Support	311,000	367,248	377,000
OTHER INCOME			
Fund Raising Events	15,000	20,000	25,000
Building Use	15,000	17,000	20,000
Activity Fees	1,700	2,000	3,000
Interest	50	50	50
Total Other Income	31,750	39,050	48,050
<i>Endowment Transfer - Operating</i>	<i>147,707</i>	<i>93,752</i>	<i>90,000</i>
<i>Endowment Transfer - Capital</i>	<i>40,000</i>	<i>60,000</i>	<i>60,000</i>
Total Transfers	187,707	153,752	150,000
TOTAL Support/Income/Transfers	530,457	560,050	575,050
EXPENSES			
Payroll Related Expenses			
Salary expense	247,201	253,992	263,567
Fringe expense	75,531	81,231	83,466
Total Payroll Expenses	322,732	335,223	347,033
Functional Expenses:			
Sunday Services - Music	6,160	8,415	8,995
Religious Exploration	4,750	4,370	5,300
Denominational	19,725	21,050	22,000
Administration & Office	23,050	22,500	23,000
Building Operations	88,750	80,100	80,500
B&G Capital Projects	40,000	60,000	60,000
Committee Funding	25,290	28,160	28,000
Total Functional Expenses	207,725	224,595	227,795
TOTAL EXPENSES	530,457	559,818	574,828
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	0	232	222

	FY 11 BUDGET	FY 12 BUDGET	FY 13 BUDGET
BUILDING OPERATIONS			
<i>Insurance</i>	26,000	17,350	17,500
<i>Fuel Oil</i>	25,000	25,000	25,000
<i>Utilities</i>	6,500	6,500	6,500
<i>Municipal Fees</i>	1,500	1,500	1,500
<i>Parish Furnishings</i>	1,000	1,000	1,000
<i>Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies</i>	4,000	4,000	4,000
<i>Snow / Ice Removal</i>	6,000	6,000	6,000
<i>General Maintenance/Grounds/Small Projects</i>	8,750	8,750	9,000
<i>Unscheduled Repairs</i>	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Building Operations	88,750	80,100	80,500
ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE			
<i>Professional Memberships</i>	50	-	-
<i>Outside Printing</i>	1,000	1,000	1,000
<i>Hospitality</i>	2,000	2,000	2,000
<i>Office Assistance</i>	2,000	2,000	2,000
<i>Telephone</i>	4,000	4,000	4,000
<i>Finance Related</i>	-	4,000	4,000
<i>General Supplies</i>	14,000	9,500	10,000
Total Administration and Office	23,050	22,500	23,000
COMMITTEE FUNDING			
<i>Auction / Fund Raising Events</i>	0	0	250
<i>Canvass/Stewardship</i>	1000	1000	1000
<i>Care Ministry</i>	600	600	600
<i>Communications</i>	3000	1500	2500
<i>Community on Ministry</i>	0	0	1000
<i>Congregational Life</i>	50	250	700
<i>Diversity Caucus</i>	0	0	1700
<i>Flowers</i>	500	500	500
<i>Historic Archives</i>	200	200	200
<i>Leadership Development</i>	240	0	500
<i>Parish Committee</i>	3000	2500	2500
<i>Photo Directory</i>	0	0	600
<i>Social Action</i>	2500	1500	1500
<i>Stained Glass Committee</i>	0	250	250
<i>Teaching Parish</i>	5000	12000	6000
<i>Technology</i>	4200	4200	4000
<i>Welcoming Team</i>	4500	2360	3000
<i>Worship</i>	500	1300	1200
TOTALS	25290	28160	28,000

**FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE
FY 2013 Time and Salary Budget**

POSTION	Percent Fulltime	UUA 2012 Guidelines		FY 13 Budget
Co-Minister - Martha	50% 6mos	87,100	<i>salary</i>	7,975
			<i>housing</i>	13,800
Co-Minster - Jim	50% 6 mos	87,100	<i>salary</i>	23,925
	100% 6 mos		<i>housing</i>	41,400
Assistant Minister		56,400		-
Director of Religious Ed	75%	51,200		37,275
Music Director	50%	54,100		24,000
Section Leaders (4)	10%	N/A		13,600
Accompanists		N/A		3,000
Parish Administrator	100%	46,300		42,500
Membership Coordinator	25%	39,100		9,300
Admin Assistant	50%	31,500		15,600
Sexton	50%	N/A		18,200
Custodian	30.5%	31,400		8,892
Nursery Staff	6%	NA		4,100
Total Staff Wages				263,567
Benefits				47,080
FICA (inc Other) & Workers Comp				22,782
Professional Expenses				13,604
Total Compensation and Expenses				347,033

UUA Compensation Guideline Insert (2 pages)

UUA Compensation Guideline Insert (2 pages)

WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Welcoming Committee Co-chairs: Anya Phillips Thomas & Claudine Kavanagh

Welcoming Committee Members: April Trussell-Smith, Gerry Leader, Cathy Ambrose, Hank Reisner, Jack Smith & Rev. Martha

Welcoming Committee Purpose / Mission Statement

- **Mission:** To attract, invite, inspire, retain, and support newcomers; to encourage membership and foster a congregation-wide pro-newcomer spirit in support of a healthy and growing church community; and to facilitate participative and joyful connections between newcomers and members.
- **Vision:** We create a welcoming atmosphere to facilitate the spiritual development of newcomers and their connection to the congregation. Welcoming, from first contact and continuing throughout membership, becomes a part of our culture at First Parish and is recognized in the wider community.

2011-2012 Duties and Goals

General Duties

1. Schedule, promote, and aid in the planning of new member recognition ceremonies as part of regular worship services.
2. Be responsible for providing greeters and ushers for each Sunday worship service.
3. Facilitate, sponsor and promote Unitarian Universalist orientation sessions.
4. Operate a robust visitor follow-up system.
5. In conjunction with the Membership Coordinator, develop and provide new visitor and new member packets.
6. Help the Membership Coordinator collect membership information and trends, and will examine it on a regular basis to spark new ideas for welcoming.
7. Review these trends on a regular basis to spark ideas for welcoming.
8. lead, by example, the welcoming of visitors to Sunday services

Annual Goals

1. Insure that at least one community building event per month occurs at First Parish through June of 2012.
2. As part of a robust visitor follow up system, assure that each visitor receives a personal, hand written card within two weeks of attendance.
3. Implement all aspects of the greeting plan agreed at team's December meeting, including workshop on greeting as a spiritual practice. Review progress on plan at each team meeting.
4. Implement "Choose or be Chosen" process for hospitality by the end of this church year so that it is institutionalized for continuing use in the following church year.
5. Set a goal for new membership for First Parish by January 2012.
 - a. Review progress on goal at each meeting and needed actions
 - b. Determine by end of January, data that team will review monthly on membership and visitors.
 - c. Periodically review departing members and reasons for departure.

2011-2012 Accomplishments:

- Welcoming- A Spiritual Practice : One day training conference
- Choose or Be Chosen Hospitality Campaign- & Reorganized Coffee Hour to encourage mingling, and child friendly areas.
- Written Welcome/Pax Window Cards
- Open Events & Newcomer Activities- Rosh Chodesh, Newcomer lunches, Newcomer Cocktail Party, Auction Babysitting, Reservoir walks, Tango lessons, Easter Egg Hunt, Pot Luck and Dance
- Re-organize , recruit, and training for Ushers
- Welcomed 24 new members into the First Parish Community.

Welcoming Committee Thanks:

Sonya Abbott, Cathy Ambrose, Robin Barraza, Janet Britcher, Claudine Kavanagh, Daniel Kavanagh, Alan Niebanck, Corey Thomas, April Trussell-Smith, and Tim Trussell-Smith.

Special thank you to 1st year greeters! Anya Thomas, Hank Reisner, Sheila Hussey, Elena Garofoli, Teresa Cooley, Val Gunning, Gerry Leader, Laura Walters, Claudine Kavanagh, Laura Walters, Jeff Cadow, Alan Niebanck, Darlene Millman, John Mignano, Liz Scully, and Jack Smith

May the culture of welcome spread like a virus by your good will, thru our commitment to building the world we dream about. If you find you want more information please look us up at tinyurl.com/fpbgreeting

Anya Phillips Thomas