

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING  
December 2, 2013**

Parish Committee Members Present: Steve Davis, Ann Gilmore, Stacey Raczek, Ryan Kim, Ann Dinsmoor, Ann Congleton, Anya Thomas and Jake Walters

Others Present: Rebecca Keller-Scholl, Sean Neil-Barron and Elena Garofoli.

**Minutes:** The November 2013 minutes were reviewed and approved.

**Minister's report:** Rev. Jim was' not able to attend the December meeting but indicated that this month's report was about Religious Exploration. Accordingly our Director of Religious Exploration Rebecca Keller-Scholl was in attendance and gave the bulk of the minister's report.. Ann Dinsmoor also contributed to portions of the report, being the former Chair of R.E. Committee and the current P.C. liaison to R.E. At present there are 80 families with 115 children registered in the R.E. Program. Of those children 106 are regular attendees, the remainder being either very young or involved in Sunday sports. Only three (3) families that were registered last year did not come back. Rebecca stated that the older youth do not attend on a regular basis, but do show up when required – for OWL or Challenge. The High School group has an excellent core group and leadership, but attendance of the remaining (we have 21 registered HS age youth) is an ongoing issue. Rebecca added that it is impossible to judge any RE program on attendance alone, which is down across the US. The RE program is trying to find ways to connect with families and children at times other than Sundays. Technology has provided some options, including an on line advent calendar. Continued attempts to reach out during the week will be explored and utilized. Our religious exploration population is very diverse, culturally, economically and styles of learning for example. There are different expectations among the many parents and children and finding a balance will be an ongoing challenge. The volunteer teachers are doing an excellent job and bring a great deal of energy to the respective classes each and every week. Since we expect the level of diversity to increase, it is a goal of the RE program to build our competence to handle the diversity we have and the hoped for diversity of the future. Teachers are understandably busy but Rebecca and the RE Committee are committed to expanding teacher education through meetings and technology.

The Diversity Caucus hopes to assist and work with both the R.E. Committee and the Parish Committee to improve the cultural competence of First Parish.

Space is and will continue to be an issue for R.E., currently the smallest class has 8 students and most are larger. The 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class has 20 students who meet in Pierce Hall, which is not an ideal location.

Rebecca concluded her report by responding to a question from the Committee as to how she feels things have gone so far this Church year. Rebecca indicated that she felt this year is progressing better than last, citing that this September all R.E. teachers were in place. Rebecca stated the children and staff are joys to work with. Rebecca indicated that she is unable to accomplish all her duties in the allotted 30 hours but loves the work and the Church.

**Report on By-Laws.** Sean Neil Barron discussed some of the items in our By-Laws that likely need to be revised. Sean also discussed the differences between By-Laws, policies and procedures. Sean indicated he would bring specific By-Law changes to us and suggested members of the Parish Committee divide up our current policies to see what updates might apply to each of them. The suggestion was enthusiastically agreed to and each PC member has taken on a specific policy to review. It was further agreed that Sean would speak with each member about his or her policy area.

The question was raised as to whether the Committee, with Sean's guidance, could resolve the several By-Law, policy and procedure updates by Annual Meeting. The consensus was to make the effort to have revisions to suggest to the Congregation prior to Annual Meeting. It was further suggested that the PC initiate a series of conversations with the congregation about any proposed changes.

**Acknowledgements:** The Parish Committee voted to gratefully acknowledge the recent contributions of the following individuals - Ann Dinsmoor for her gift of the custom sideboard she made, Ann Copeland (and her committee) for last week's Vespers service, Sheila Hussey as Chair of the Stained Glass Committee and Melinda Maryniuk & Senofer Mendoza for their efforts in organizing and creating the Holiday Party in December.

There being no other business it was unanimously voted to Adjourn.

Respectfully submitted

Jake Walters, Clerk