

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING
October 7, 2013**

Parish Committee Members Present: , Steve Davis, Ann Gilmore, Stacey Raczek, Ryan Kim, Greg Buckland, Ann Dinsmoor, Ann Congleton , and Jake Walters
Others Present: Rev. Jim Sherblom, and Sean Neil-Barron.

Weekend Debriefing: A number of Parish Committee members attended the Next Step weekend and there was a discussion about the program as committee members shared their thoughts and experiences. Those that attended were in unanimous agreement that Sunday's leader/speaker Mark Ewert provided a wealth of information for thought and discussion as our congregation works on its mission, vision & planning. One of the comments made was how refreshing it was to see our church through someone else's eyes, and all agreed the questions raised – including what brings people to First Parish, what do they want to happen once they are here, what should our future look like & what questions can we use to assist our vision for the future, will help us as a community make the difficult decisions about our building, the R.E. program and outreach to name a few. The conversation concluded with the general consensus that this is a process that cannot be rushed and the conversation will continue for years to come.

Congregational record: The Committee briefly discussed the congregational record and agreed to approve it and to further review additions to it.

Sean Neil-Baron: Provided P.C. members with an Executive Summary and comments on our By-Laws. Sean gave an overview of his extensive written material, pointing out a number of areas in both our By-Laws and policies the P.C. and congregation may want to address. It was suggested the P.C. may want to present revised By-Laws for discussion at annual meeting, and also consider revising our policy manual & procedures (along with appending reasons for the changes). Sean ended his presentation by suggesting the By-Laws be pared down to contain only essential elements and our policies be more flexible.

Minister's report: Rev. Jim's report touched upon five areas: (1) Beloved community Rev. Jim said that 10 members of the congregation were trained as pastoral care associates, and will reach out to 50 members by the end of the month with a goal of reaching out to most of our 270 members by next summer. The welcoming team has begun to focus on deepening engagement with new visitors and friends. First Parish is offering five different pot luck groups and four different small group spirituality offerings which engage almost half of our congregation. (2) High School Youth – Sarah Napoline has been deepening her relationship with the dozen or so post challenge youth actively involved at First Parish, while reaching out to other youth not as engaged in our community. The high school youth have been more of a bigger presence on worship, committees and helping in the R.E. program. Rev. Jim feels there will be more opportunities for youth as we gradually transform the youth culture at F.P. (3) Children & Youth – Karen Kepler, as chair of the Religious Exploration Committee, has been a wonderful addition to this area of our ministry. Karen has been meeting with Rebecca & Rev. Jim to help decide along with the R.E. Committee how to best address our children and youth

goals. (4) Cultural Competence – Maria Cristina’s work with the Diversity Caucus has already begun to help the caucus to re-envision its role in developing our cultural competence here. Mykal Slack, a self-identified black transgender minister, when preaching here this summer, offered himself as an additional resource for this important work. Mykal, Maria Cristina, and I will be meeting with a combined meeting of the Second Minister Search Committee and Diversity Caucus to explore what are the ramifications, benefits, and issues of our considering more diverse candidates for the second minister position. Mykal plans to preach here again next January, and then he and Maria Cristina will offer a series of four workshops on Transgender and Queer issues, particularly from the perspective of people of color and other marginalized groups. We have brought cultural competency issues into worship with the adoption of Spanish language usage and with my (Rev. Jim’s) preaching about cultural competency. I think we will come to better understand what this means for the community we are becoming as the year progresses. (5) Social Action – Rev Jim is hoping the Diversity Caucus might join with the Social Action Committee to identify a project or projects. To date Social Action members have a variety of possibilities but have not, as a committee, honed in a particular project that might become a transforming experience for those who participate.

Auction- Holiday Party: Rev. Jim reported that the auctioned for October 19th, will not go forward but will combine with the holiday party taking place in December. The theme of the event will also change.

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

Respectfully submitted
Jake Walters, Clerk