

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
September 8, 2014**

PC Members Present: Sue Andrews, Ann Congleton, Steve Davis, Ann Dinsmoor, Elena Garofoli, Ann Gilmore, Stacey Raczek, Corey Thomas. Also present: Rev. Jim Sherblom

Check in – In what ways are you different now than you were in June?

**Minister's Report:**

Rev. Jim requested a vote on the issue of FPB agreeing to act as fiscal agent for any funding former FPB ministerial intern, Rev. Mary Helen Gunn, receives from the UU Funding panel for her campus ministry at Northeastern University. **APPROVED** by unanimous vote.

Rev. Jim discussed changing trends in church attendance and church visits by newcomers. Visitors used to come based on word of mouth, local newspaper announcements, living nearby, UU affiliation. Now many newcomers, especially millennials, come based on checking out church websites, Facebook pages, or Yelp reviews online. Scott Ullrich will be working to improve our social media and online presence. Rev. Jim also encouraged interested PC members to join him in attending an upcoming workshop in Providence on Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> on UU Social Media & Membership Growth.

In terms of active church membership, attendance at Sunday worship services is trending downward, while attendance at workshops, interest groups, and other church gatherings is trending upwards. 167 people attended this year's Opening Sunday on September 7<sup>th</sup>, which is the lowest number on that Sunday in recent history.

We are looking into expanding our worship styles and opportunities. Towards that end, Rev. Jim recently invited Rev. Thandeka to work with our staff on creating the worship experience. She will be returning to work with our lay leadership the first weekend in December. We will be continuing our contemplative Vesper services once a month on Sunday evenings and also hope to offer Sanctuary style services occasionally on Friday evenings.

**Parish Committee Covenant**

In order to work together in right relationship and in a way that is productive, efficient and spiritual, we took time at our June retreat to update and expand our covenant. Thanks to Ann D and Elena for working on this over the summer, distilling the 21 covenantal statements generated in June into a more manageable group of 9 agreements! After discussion, we decided to:

- 1) add "and in right relationship" to "speak from personal experience" in item #2;
- 2) replace the word "support" with the word "honor" in item #7;
- 3) replace "rather than for deliberation of issues" with "rather than the in depth discussion of issues" in item #8 relating to use of e-mail.

This amended covenant was **APPROVED** by unanimous vote. We will have it with us at our meetings on the back of our agenda. We will also designate one person at each meeting to take on the role of process observer, including being mindful of the time and of our observance of our covenant, along with actively participating in the meeting.

**Song – Walking with You**

## **Parish Committee Leadership**

Thanks to Corey Thomas for generously volunteering to serve as our Vice Chair this year! We discussed the fact that our expectation and our practice in recent years has been that the Vice Chair serves in that position for one year and then serves as Chair for the subsequent two years. However, this role and its creation is neither provided for in our by-laws nor an official policy. This will be addressed within the scope of this year's continuation of the process of updating our by-laws through congregational engagement and vote at our next annual meeting next spring. In the meantime, everyone, with the exception of Corey who abstained,

**APPROVED** the following motion: Corey Thomas is hereby nominated for the position of Vice Chair of the Parish Committee and expected Chair-elect. The Chair-elect status will be subject to the terms and method of electing the Parish Committee Chair and the Vice-Chair to be voted on in the May 2015 Annual Meeting.

## **Second Minister Search Committee**

Thanks to Steve for drafting revisions of the charter for the SMSC! After consultation with Janet Britcher, he recommended that we keep last year's committee intact, as long as there are at least 7 members willing to continue. This will enable the committee to leverage lessons learned from last year, and to give a sense of closure to those who have already worked so hard on this process. We need to attract and target candidates who are seeking a second (assistant) minister position so as not to end up as the fall back position for those who are seeking a position as a called minister. Sue is interested in continuing on the committee and Ann G would like to be a participating member of the committee rather than continue as the liaison from the PC.

The revised SMSC Charter was unanimously **APPROVED**.

## **Parish Committee Goals**

Thanks to Ann D and Corey for their work over the summer in drafting detailed action steps, process benchmarks, and outcome benchmarks for the goals we set for ourselves this year at our retreat in June! Since we did not have time to review and discuss the implementation of these goals, we will devote much of our next meeting on Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> to this. We will also meet on October 20<sup>th</sup> to handle our regular monthly PC business, including our minister's report, our treasurer's report, etc.

In the meantime, PC members should consider which goal she/he is willing to take a leadership role on, and which 1 or 2 others she/he is willing to take a supporting role on.

## **Review of Process/Covenant**

Thanks to Ann D for serving as our Process Observer for this meeting! We did well in keeping to our scheduled agenda, time frame, and covenant.

Finally, thank to Steve for all of his excellent work in preparing our agenda, numerous supporting documents, and for his loving leadership during the meeting!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Gilmore, Clerk