

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
April 6, 2015**

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

**Check-In:** Rev. Jim posed the question “What does Beloved Community mean to you?” Each PC member spoke in turn using words and phrases including “to be seen and heard, joy, journey, taking risks, making mistakes, loved unconditionally, individual is loved as much as the whole, not majority rule, everyone needs to be heard, an active practice, transformative, noticing judgments and changing them, getting beyond cultural norms I was raised with, resonates, inherent worth and dignity, really challenging.”

**Ministerial Dialogue** with Rev. Jim & Rev. Maria Cristina – continuing the conversation Rev. Jim shared that one of the most poignant parts of his ministry is to figure out how to help the congregation move into Beloved Community. He grew up with a sense of beloved community and knows that when he feels that kind of love and trust, he can take risks and flower.

Rev. Maria Cristina referenced MLK Jr.’s vision of Beloved Community, which expanded from racial justice to economic justice to ending war. She described it as an inward and outward spiral, moving from the self towards the other, noticing the power dynamics and asking, “Who is being left out?”

Where are we as a community on the continuum of becoming a multi-cultural, anti-racist, anti-oppressive community?

We have made progress, but we are still afraid of including those who “make waves,” and still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism, and control.

Stacey raised the issue - how can we make our annual meeting in May an experience of beloved community?

We will consider that and also plan to continue the discussion of Beloved Community at our June PC meeting, which will include our current members along with the newly elected PC members.

### **Minutes**

The minutes from our March 16 meeting were **Approved**.

### **Budget**

Stacey reported on the status of our FY 14/15 budget. We are on track with our income. In terms of expenses, our costs for snow removal have run \$5,000 to \$10,000 over budget, but we may still end up \$5,000 to \$10,000 under our projected expenses for the year.

Our FY15/16 budget process is well underway. The initial proposed budget has been discussed and reviewed by the Finance Council. After getting feedback from the PC, the proposal may be

updated, and then presented at a congregational budget meeting after our April 26<sup>th</sup> worship service. We will revisit it at our May 4<sup>th</sup> PC meeting and present the final proposal to the congregation for ratification at our annual meeting on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

We have \$382,000 in pledges so far, with 45 individuals/families who pledged last year, but who have not yet pledged for next year. PC members will assist Canvass co-chairs Alice Mark and Dave Demerjian in contacting these individuals. To be conservative, we will project the same amount for pledge income for FY15/16 as we budgeted for FY14/15, which is \$420,000.

The big issue on the expense side is fair compensation for our staff. Since we are not projecting an increase in pledge income, we are looking at drawing an additional 8,500 from our endowment to fund salary increases, based on a commitment we made at our November PC meeting “to increase the total of existing staff compensation by a minimum of \$8500 in FY2015/16, allocated where the gaps are the greatest, even if that requires us to draw more from our endowment.” (See PC minutes of Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014). It was pointed out that that amount was a bare minimum and would not get us very far along in our goal of compensating staff at the mid-point of the fair compensation guidelines for our congregation. To close that gap, we would need an additional \$39,000. We are committed to getting at least a third of the way towards closing that gap this year. We should highlight the tension between our fair compensation goals and our goal of lowering our endowment draw to 4.5% of capital as an issue for discussion at our congregational budget meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>. We also need to be realistic with the congregation about living beyond our means and repeatedly drawing more from our endowment as a way of reconciling our budget. The only long-term way out of this is to increase our income.

This tension also highlights the need and creates a new sense of urgency for us to sell our silver items which are being stored at the MFA and which the congregation voted the requisite two times to sell during FY 13/14. Two members of the Finance Council are looking into this.

**Song** Sue led us in singing Frank Sinatra’s “High Hopes”

### **By-Law Sub-Committee**

Steve and Corey presented some proposals to clarify some aspects of governance at FPB. They separated the concept of “reporting relationships” which are clear and non-controversial from “employment relationships” which involve hiring, evaluation, and possible terminations. They proposed that we establish:

1. A newly chartered committee, elected by the congregation, which would focus on both ministry and mission. It would replace the existing Committee on Ministry, which operates as a sounding board for the ministers. The new committee would work with the ministerial team as well as engage with the congregation to provide direction and assess how we are doing in terms of goals and mission.
2. A human resources standing committee, chartered and appointed by the PC, which would meet as needed and serve in an advisory capacity to the PC on our employment policies and practices, including compensation.

These proposals will be discussed with the congregation on Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> following the worship service.

### **Mission Sub-Committee**

Ann D reported that, after gathering input from the congregation, we have a list of 5 proposed mission statements, which we will share with the congregation through the May newsletter and at the Sunday service on May 3. During the service, we will share the proposed statements orally and in the order of service. Following the service, we will invite people to indicate their preferences with up to three tally marks, as well as to circle what they like and/or cross out what they don't like. We will collect this feedback and share it with the PC at our May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Parish Committee Leadership**

At our last meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>, Corey regretfully announced that he would not be able to stand for election as PC chair for the coming year, due to a combination of family and work commitments. Effective immediately, he resigned as PC vice-chair/chair –elect. In the interim, Ann Dinsmoor has stepped up and offered to serve in his place. A motion was made and **Approved** to nominate Ann D as vice-chair of the PC and expected chair-elect. The chair elect status will be subject to the terms and method of electing the PC chair and vice-chair to be voted on at our annual meeting on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

In addition, Steve would like to stay on the PC for an additional year as a past-chair.

We are so thankful to Steve and Corey for their inspirational leadership this year, and look forward to the gift of Ann D's leadership!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Gilmore, Clerk