



A WELCOMING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

May 8, 2017

Dear Member of First Parish in Brookline,

Join us on Sunday, May 21, 2017 from 12:45 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 Ministerial Blessing
Approve Minutes of 2016 Annual Meeting
Recognize and elect New Members
Recognize General Assembly Delegates
Elect Officers and Committee Members
Budget Presentation and Vote on Fiscal Year 2017-2018
Paper ballot vote for Ministerial Search Committee
Any Other Business
Hymn (*This Little Light of Mine*)
Extinguishing the Chalice
Adjourn

Hoping to see you at 12:45 pm in Lyon Chapel on Sunday, May 21, 2017.

Sue Andrews,
Parish Board Chair

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

New Parish Members

The following **31** people have signed the membership book since our last Annual Meeting:

Jennifer Allaire	Jessica Firing	Nancy Marks
Jeremey Allaire	Max Hoguet	David Moir
Barton Bracken	Tania Gurian	Nora O'Farrell
Emily Bright	Erin Kelly	Brian O'Halloran
Anne Brown	Patricia Kinsella	Jean O'Halloran
Alfred Brownell	David Krewinghaus	Sally Regan Ruderman
Bessie Brownell	Whitfield Larrabee	Adam Wilson
Julia Burch	Kate Lavelle	Kim Wilson
Rebecca Cavallaro	Sarah Luchansky	Margaret Wood
Deane Coady	Emerson Lynch	Lawrence Zaborski
Janice Evans		

Delegates to General Assembly 2017

The following 5 people have volunteered to be delegates from FPB to UUA General Assembly in New Orleans, June 21-25, 2017:

Priscilla Brown
Greg Buckland
Michele David
Martha Leader
Anya Thomas

Officers and Standing Committee Members

The Nominating Committee nominates the following members:

For Clerk of the Parish	Alice Mark
For Treasurer	Ben Davis
For Moderator	Bob Williamson
For Alternate Moderator	Katherine Chaurrette
For the Parish Board	Dave Demerjian Charles Sandmel Gene Thompson-Grove
For Nominating Committee	Melinda Maryniuk Laura Walters Ron Wilkinson

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Raczek
Clerk of the Parish

FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE
Minutes of the 299th Annual Meeting
May 22, 2016

Call to Order and quorum established by Moderator Bob Williamson at approximately 12:45pm

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Unison Reading of Mission Statement

Called by Love, Sustained By Community, Committed to Justice

We strive to be a welcoming, diverse and loving congregation that nurtures spiritual growth for individuals and families, celebrates multicultural community, and works together to demand social justice, dismantle racism, and care for our living earth.

Approve 2015 Minutes

The minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting were **approved**.

Recognize and Elect New Members

The following 9 people signed the membership book since our 2015 Annual Meeting:

Jessica Alm, Charissa Benak, Sean Benak, Phil Didlake, Rob Ellison, Ben Gibbons, Sara Gibbons, Jenny Madrigal, Susie Shayegani.

A motion to accept these new members was **approved**.

Elect Officers and Committee Members

The following officers and committee members, nominated by the Leadership Development Committee, were elected:

Clerk of the Parish	TBD
Treasurer	Ben Davis
Parish Committee	David Cave, Ann Dinsmoor, Laura Hatfield, and Alice Mark
Moderator	Bob Williamson

In addition, Sara Warren, nominated by the Parish Committee, was elected to the Leadership Development Committee.

Parish Committee Report

Chair Ann Dinsmoor remarked that this has been a year of change and transition. Rev Dr. Jim Sherblom ended his ministry with us in December, 2015, and used the second half of the church year as his sabbatical time to explore new directions. Rev. Rebecca Bryan was initially brought on as our interim minister for an 18 month commitment from Jan. 2016-June of 2017. The PC formed a five-member Transition Team to work closely with Rev. Rebecca and with the congregation. In early April of 2016, the Transition Team recommended, and the PC voted, to extend the interim period another 12 months, through June 2018, and invited Rev. Rebecca to stay through this extended time. In late April. Rev. Dr. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa announced that she had unexpectedly been invited to consider becoming the minister of a UU congregation in Hayward, California. On May 15, that congregation voted to call her and she accepted. This sudden and unanticipated news thrust us into deeper reflection about our shared journey toward becoming a multi-cultural, anti-racist congregation.

On behalf of the PC and the congregation, Ann Dinsmoor and Ann Gilmore each expressed their gratitude to Rev. Maria Cristina for her transformative ministry.

Motions and Resolutions

1. 300th Year Celebration –

A motion to adopt the following proclamation was **approved**:

During our 2016–2017 church year, First Parish will celebrate its 300th year and the enduring role this congregation has played in the town of Brookline and in the lives of our members throughout our history. We will also look forward to beginning the next 100 years; calling a new minister, supporting our growing congregation, continuing our active role in social justice issues in the greater Boston community, and, in all ways, standing on the side of love.

2. Ordination of Erica Richmond

A motion was **approved** for FPB to join with the Unitarian Society of Hartford, to ordain Erica Richmond.

3. Trustee of the Jane Hoey Challenge Fund

A motion was **approved** to appoint Jeff Cadow as trustee of the Jane Hoey Challenge Fund.

4. Boston New Sanctuary Movement

A motion was **approved** to adopt the following resolution:

We at First Parish in Brookline reaffirm our congregational commitment to the Boston New Sanctuary Movement, which we first adopted in 2011; we stand in solidarity with people in our communities who are at risk of being deported back to the violent situations they fled; and we support the offering of physical sanctuary by faith groups of the Boston New Sanctuary Movement through the collective efforts of this interfaith coalition.

5. Affirmation of FPB as a Transgender – Friendly Congregation

A motion was **approved** to affirm our 2006 congregational vote to be a welcoming congregation and to reaffirm support for transgender people by raising a special flag that publicly demonstrates our support of trans persons, chosen by this year's Challenge youth and paid for out of the Jane Hoey Challenge Fund.

Minister's Report

Rev Rebecca reported on her first five months with us and reviewed the goals of our interim ministry: (1) honoring our past including griefs and conflicts; (2) recognizing our unique identity, strengths, needs and challenges; (3) clarifying and navigating shifts in leadership roles; (4) making use of UUA and other outside resources; and (5) renewing our vision and stewardship, preparing for new professional leadership, and embracing the future with anticipation and zest!

Song Siyahamba

Discussion and Vote on FY2017 Budget

Treasurer Stacey Raczek presented an overview of the past year's income and expenses and FY2016 is tracking closely to budget. The withdrawal from the endowment will be \$261,500 or about 11.9 % of the total. This level is not sustainable, but is part of a year of ministerial transition.

The proposed budget for FY 2017 was developed through a multi—stage process including staff projections, Finance Council review and recommendations, Parish Committee review and four well attended budget hearings with the congregation. A key point of discussion was how to meet the fiscal goals of the church in a way that is consistent with our mission.

Before voting on the proposed budget for FY 2017, an amendment was offered by the Parish Committee to "add \$7,500 to the total budget as a line item under "Special/Committee Funding (Parish Committee)" for an "Emergency Ministry Fund." This is designed to give us more flexibility as we work to adjust to Rev. Maria Cristina's departure and move more deeply into the work of our interim ministry.

A motion to adopt this amendment was **approved**, with two "no" votes and three abstentions.

With the FY2017 proposed budget as amended, our income is projected to be \$461,550, while our expenses are estimated to be \$631,803. This would require a draw on our endowment of approximately 10.3%.

Questions were raised as to why our expenses and endowment draw would remain so high given that we are losing our .75 FTE assistant minister.

Parish Chair Ann Dinsmoor explained that, because of the departure of Rev. Maria Cristina, and because we are in an interim period, the recommendation is to increase responsibilities and compensation of existing staff instead of making new permanent hires. The cost projections for implementing this recommendation include: an increase of \$2,500 for additional guest ministers, an additional \$2,500 for pastoral care, an additional \$10,765 compensation to increase our Membership Coordinator's hours to coordinate Adult Faith Formation, an additional \$11,624 to increase our Office Assistant's hours up to 10 additional hours per week, an additional \$10,000 for a consultant for anti-racism and multicultural work, an additional \$2,500 to support youth programming and an additional \$3,000 compensation for our interim minister given her additional duties, for a total cost of \$42,914.

Questions and comments were addressed to many of these proposed increases. A motion was made to extend the meeting to allow more time for discussion. That motion was **not approved**.

A motion to adopt the proposed budget for FY 2017 was **approved**:
35 votes in favor, 8 votes against and 7 abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Gilmore
Clerk of the Parish

INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER 2017 REPORT

Dear friends,

What a wonderful year we have had together! Wow! It has been full of so many blessings. Writing each one down on a list would take away from their magnificence. Each blessing in and of itself is important; taken together, their sum is much greater than the total of the parts.

This year we lived into what it means to be in a covenantal community. We started the year with the introduction and endorsement of the Board (then Parish Committee) and several committees to use the guidelines for effective cross-cultural dialogue as written by Visions Inc.¹

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE (Visions, Inc.)

1. “Try on”
2. It’s okay to disagree
3. It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack, self or others
4. Practice “self-focus”
5. Practice “both/and” thinking
6. Notice both process and content
7. Be aware of intent and impact
8. Confidentiality

Living into our mission while addressing the goals for interim ministry, as outlined by the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Transitions Office, was the underpinning of our year’s shared ministry.

These goals of interim ministry include:

- claiming and honoring its past and engaging and honoring its griefs and conflicts
- recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges
- clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition
- making appropriate use of regional, UUA, and other outside resources
- proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

Over the course of this church year we “tried-on” using monthly ministry themes, incorporating Candles of Peace and increasing the role of Worship Associates and other lay voices in worship services. The Pastoral Care Associates expanded their important work to include offering small group ministry while continuing their amazing pastoral care to the congregation through challenges our members faced including illness, job loss, family transitions, and death. The Parish Board (Parish Committee until February 12, 2017) was committed to and successful in their efforts to increase transparency and engagement. Bylaws were updated and committees joined together to work on things including budget, anti-racism work and offering congregational conversations. At the same time the Board underwent a change in leadership with two Board members including the Chair.

The Transitions Team designed and implemented a survey that engaged more than 176 people and served as a spring board for subsequent discussions and discernment. Sunday attendance and membership has been steadily growing while, most importantly, people’s engagement with and commitment to the congregation deepened.

¹ <http://visions-inc.org>

After the Presidential elections in November, increased energy and concern went into various issues of social justice including: participating in the Women's March in both Boston and Washington, DC, becoming a Level 2 Sanctuary church², and strengthening our engagement working for Black Lives Matter, Black Lives of UU, and other racial justice work.

This truly has been a year of "AND." We mourned the departure of DRE, Rebecca Keller Scholl, and we celebrated the hard work of everyone who stepped in to volunteer for and carry the religious exploration program this church year. We exceeded our canvas goal of \$420,000 and we made difficult decisions in reducing staffing as we moved toward a sustainable Endowment draw. We started a Shared Leadership Team including the Parish Board, Diversity Caucus, and Transition Team, and we acknowledged how much work we still have to do to become a truly anti-racist congregation. We loved, and we made mistakes. We took risks, and we held on to tradition.

There are so many other things that could be highlighted. I hope that you will read this Annual Report in its entirety so as to understand the breadth and depth of the life of this congregation.

I offer in closing a traditional Universalist prayer that we turned to during the post election time. It served us well as it did our ancestors years ago. May it carry you throughout the summer days ahead. May your hearts know peace and may your spirit be well.

***Go out into the world in peace
Have courage
Hold on to what is good
Return to no person evil for evil
Strengthen the faint-hearted
Support the weak
Help the suffering
Honor all beings.***

Thank you for gifting me with the joy of serving as your interim minister.

Love,
Reverend Rebecca M. Bryan
Interim Senior Minister

MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP TEAM REPORT

The Ministerial Fellowship Team has met monthly with Rev. Rebecca during the 2016-17 church year, providing feedback, support and guidance to our interim minister as she progresses toward final fellowship with the UUA. We are pleased to report that, after our written submission to the UUA in November, 2016, Rev. Rebecca Bryan was awarded her first of three required passes by the UUA. The team will submit a second fellowship application by July 1, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Andrews, Chair
David Cave, Emily Cherry and Sheila Hussey

² First Parish Brookline commits to being a Level 2 Sanctuary and to provide that level of support to St. Mary's Church in Dorchester and other Level 1 when needed. Being a Level 2 Sanctuary involves providing support to the primary Sanctuary church in ways that they may need, such as providing food, materials, companions.

TRANSITION TEAM ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2017

The Transition Team was formed to assist the Interim Ministry throughout the interim period between settled ministers (from the departure of Rev. Jim Sherblom through the departure of interim minister Rev Rebecca Bryan and welcoming of the new settled minister).

Members: Anne Copeland and Mark Reynolds, Co-Chairs; Jami Jordan, Bob Williamson, Rev Rebecca Bryan

Meetings: Monthly, with occasional additional special meetings or projects

Tasks: The Transition Team is guided by the following Tasks of an Interim Ministry, as outlined by the UUA:

- claiming and honoring its past and engaging and honoring its griefs and conflicts
- recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges
- clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition
- making appropriate use of District, UUA, and other outside resources
- proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

Activities: During the 2016-17 church year, the Transition Team:

- Recommended and facilitated discussions among various committees in an effort to improve cross-committee understanding (Parish Board, Diversity Caucus, RE Committee).
- Organized and participated in a healing service in November 2016, to help the congregation process the many changes and transitions we have gone through together.
- Conducted an online survey of members and friends concerning their (a) views of the church's mission statement, (b) primary reasons for coming to First Parish and (c) ideas about financial sustainability. 176 members or friends responded to the survey. Results of the survey were shared with the Parish Board, the Finance Council, and the congregation at large. A summary of the findings is appended to this report.
- Maintained a Suggestion Box for people to ask questions or make observations (although this has been rarely used)
- Written periodic updates of their activities in the church monthly newsletter
- Interviewed members of the Search Committees that hired Revs Niebanck and Sherblom, and Rev. Vlassidis Burgoa, and shared the results of these interviews – specifically, their advice about important qualities for Search Committee members - with the congregation, in preparation for member-based nominations for the upcoming Search Committee.
- Held a congregational meeting about the process of the upcoming ministerial search, to clarify questions of process. Support materials are appended to this report.
- Joined the newly-formed Shared Leadership team (with Diversity Caucus and Parish Board).
- Provided periodic consultation to Rev. Rebecca on interim ministry matters.

Going forward, the Transition Team will be responsive to congregational and ministerial needs related to the interim ministry period, working with the Parish Board and Rev. Rebecca Bryan to understand and address the church's history and points of conflict, and to help it live into its mission.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Copeland, Co-Chair

REPORT OF THE PARISH BOARD

(Formerly Parish Committee)

Congregational Year 2016-2017

As First Parish in Brookline began its 300th church year, the Parish Board convened in August, after a 2 month summer hiatus. This would be the first full year of our interim ministry with Rev. Rebecca Bryan. Several important transitions were to occur during the 2016-17 church year, and members of the Board were tasked with ensuring transparency to the congregation during what was to be a turbulent year of change.

In August, the Board members included Sue Andrews (Acting Clerk) David Cave, Michele David (Board Chair Elect), Ben Davis (Treasurer), Ann Dinsmoor (Board Chair), Elena Garofoli, Laura Hatfield, Alice Mark, and James Shillaber, as well as Rev. Rebecca Bryan (ex-officio).

During our first meeting, we approved a restructuring of the Finance Committee and Finance Council. We began a conversation, which had been initiated by the Canvass Team (Karla Baehr and Bob Williamson), about efforts to reach each congregant, soliciting opinions re: many facets of congregational life at First Parish in Brookline. This project was to eventually be housed with the Transition Team. We also unanimously approved adoption by the Board of the 8 norms of cross cultural dialogue, suggested by Visions, Inc. These 8 norms were later posted throughout the church. They are:

- a) Be willing to listen, learn, and “try on” new ideas.
- b) Value differences of opinion and different perspectives.
- c) It’s not okay to blame, shame, or attack self or others.
- d) Speak from our own perspective and be self-aware.
- e) Practice “both/and” thinking instead of “either/or” and “but”.
- f) Value process as well as content.
- g) Assume good intentions and be aware of impact.
- h) Maintain confidentiality.

As well as adhering to these principles to the best of our abilities, we also adopted our own covenant.

The Board approved a proposal for a monthly Sunday Stewardship Collection project, designed to increase generosity during the Sunday offerings and in general.

Off to a good start, the Board proceeded to its Fall work, which included establishment of the following goals, listed here along with the individual Board member who accepted responsibility for each.

- 1) Create and begin the implementation of a staffing and ministerial model that will serve the congregation through the transition period and into the new called ministry. Michele David
- 2) Develop a plan for the management of finances that includes a robust budget to meet the congregation’s needs, and a plan for financial sustainability and appropriate use of endowment funds. Ben Davis
- 3) Advance FPB’s work of living into our mission to celebrate cultural diversity. James Shillaber
- 4) Establish a Search Committee for the new called minister. Rev. Rebecca
- 5) Complete review and revision of the bylaws and key policies and procedures. Sue Andrews
- 6) Create a definition of stewardship and create structures in the church that encourage maximal participation. Laura Hatfield

In September the Board dealt with the loss of two positions. First, Elena Garofoli resigned from the Board for personal reasons. This was to have been her last year serving on the Board. The decision was made not to replace her, and to keep the number of Board members at 8.

Next, Rebecca Keller-Scholl, Director of Religious Exploration, resigned her position due to lack of fit between her goals and FPB's current needs. It was decided not to seek to replace this position immediately, since the co-chairs of the Religious Exploration Committee felt the programs could continue with volunteer efforts until staffing and budget were more closely examined by the Board. Board member Alice Mark brought a task force together to gather information from the congregation re: FPB's long term vision for Religious Exploration. The Board approved Rev. Rebecca's recommendation to begin searching for temporary personnel to administer the RE program. This search was ultimately unsuccessful.

Later on in March, a formal Search Committee was formed to find a Religious Exploration Coordinator. That search remains in progress.

By late October, 2016, James Shillaber had assembled a task force to brainstorm a scope for a project to hire a consultant to help FPB celebrate multicultural diversity. This task force would proceed to vet a list of possible consultants.

In December 2016, the Board received a report from Ellen Blaney and Tania Erlij, co-chairs of the Immigration Justice Committee, relating that Centro Presente had requested that FPB provide physical sanctuary for immigrants in immediate danger of deportation. Although the Board agreed that this issue, with its several pros and cons, should come before the congregation, it was decided that more information, including financial, legal, human resource and other possible costs to the congregation, was needed before a congregation-wide conversation could be scheduled.

By December the now named Multicultural/Antiracist Task Force had interviewed 3 possible consultants. They also recommended that the Board meet with Meck Groot, Justice Ministries Lead from the UUA New England Region. The Board agreed to schedule a meeting with Meck as soon as possible after the New Year holiday.

By this time the Board had read, heard, and approved suggested amendments to FPB's bylaws. Three congregational conversations were held, at which Sue Andrews had taken note of specific suggestions from congregants. A tentative date for a congregational meeting to vote on the amendments was set for February 12, 2017.

The New Year 2017 was another time of transition for the Board. Our chair, Ann Dinsmoor, came to the difficult decision that she would be stepping down, and also leaving the Board, as soon as possible after our January 9th meeting. After several days of discernment following this meeting, Sue Andrews volunteered to chair the Board until Michele David, Chair-Elect will step into the role on July 1, 2017. Since Sue Andrews was currently acting clerk, Stacey Raczek, former Board member and Treasurer, graciously agreed to come back on to the Board and be our clerk through the remainder of the church year.

Further discussion re: providing physical sanctuary at FPB was aided at our February meeting by the presence of Jody Leader and Karla Baehr from Immigration Justice Committee, as well as member and attorney Whit Larrabee, who answered questions about the legal implications of providing sanctuary. The Board co-sponsored a congregational discussion re: the pros and cons of providing sanctuary on February 5, 2017. Follow up to this meeting can be found in the report from the Immigration Justice Committee.

On February 12, 2017, a congregational meeting was held to vote on proposed Bylaws amendments. All proposed amendments were voted on positively by at least a 2/3 majority of the members present, excepting two amendments which were set aside for future consideration. Also at this meeting, a new Policy for the Formulation of a Ministerial Search Committee was approved by the members present. The new Bylaws 2017 can be found on the FPB website.

In February, the Board heard preliminary plans to offer rental space at FPB to Clinton Path Preschool, presently housed at St. Paul's Church in Brookline and seeking a new location. The Board authorized Karla Baehr, Bob Williamson, Jake Walters as legal advisee, and Ryan Kim as liaison from the Finance Council to continue negotiations with Clinton Path. It was hoped that a significant revenue stream could be created from this type of rental use of our building.

Michele David reported to the Board that the task force on staffing that she had created recommended that FPB continue with our current staffing model, including one senior minister, current music staff, a senior administrator and assistant administrator, a religious education staffer not responsible for adult learning, a custodian, and a membership coordinator. This model was posed as a starting point for budget considerations in April.

Continuing our efforts towards antiracism discernment, the Board met with Meck Groot, as had been recommended by the Multicultural/Antiracist Task Force, on February 23, 2017. Meck facilitated discussion centered around how we as a Board had behaved unfairly towards persons of color in the past, and how the Board will need to step into leadership around racial equity going forward. Meck offered to return as needed as this process unfolds.

March found the Board hearing further considerations about renting FPB space to preschools, with two other schools inquiring. Sara Warren joined the previously formed rental negotiations group, and this group was given authority to continue negotiations and urged to report to the Board as plans develop.

Our April Board meeting was devoted for the most part to forming the draft budget for fiscal year 2018. Our Canvass Team reported optimistic predictions for pledge amounts, as well as an increased offertory plate collection amount this year. We found that in order to keep our endowment draw at less than 9 percent, we would need to make some staffing cuts. The draft budget eliminated the administrative assistant and membership coordinator positions, as well as decreased the amount paid to our now sought for Religious Exploration Coordinator from what we had paid to the Director of Religious Exploration.

Budget hearings were planned for April 9 and April 30. As of this writing, a final budget has not been formulated. Suggestions were made for some changes to the draft Budget at the April Finance Council meeting.

Also in April, in response to the resignation of several UUA leaders due to unfair practices in hiring, the Board joined with the Transition Team and Diversity Caucus to form a shared leadership group. It is hoped that this group can continue to provide leadership as we move forward into greater awareness of any and all lack of equity for persons of color at FPB.

As we continue into our second full year of interim work, we are happy to present a ballot of members who have agreed, if elected at this Annual Meeting, to serve on our Ministerial Search Committee. We are also pleased to report our commitment to being a Level 2 Sanctuary Church, providing support to St. Mary's Church in Dorchester when needed.

Although we have not fully completed all of our goals for this church year, the Board has worked diligently through the challenges presented by unavoidable and unexpected changes. We are on a path toward financial sustainability, aided by able volunteers. With guidance from the Diversity Caucus and Transition Team, we expect to hire an antiracism consultant, who will begin working with the Board at our late summer retreat. We are committed to safeguarding the growth of this church as we move more deeply into our mission of providing a safe, loving community of justice, seeking Unitarian Universalists, who encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to join our church family.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your interim Board Chair.

Respectfully,

Sue Andrews, Chair, First Parish Board.

Board Members: David Cave, Ben Davis, Michele David, Laura Hatfield, Alice Mark, Stacey Raczek, and James Shillaber.

SPACE RENTAL EXPANSION TASK FORCE OF THE PARISH BOARD

Sara Warren, Bob Williamson and Karla Baehr

We heard you! 70% of the respondents to the fall survey by the Transition Team felt that First Parish should proactively undertake an effort to expand increasing First Parish rentals as one strategy for closing our financial “sustainability gap” – the gap between a sustainable annual draw from our endowment and our yearly spending on staff, programs and building maintenance. Our ad-hoc task force began that effort on behalf of the Parish Board when a local preschool, Clinton Path, approached First Parish about renting space on a long-term basis. In March, the task force reported in the FPB newsletter that the Parish Board has authorized the Task Force to enter into “good faith negotiations” with Clinton Path.

What we learned from our discussions with Clinton Path. Negotiations began in earnest. Our work included completing a study of market rents. We learned that our space is likely more valuable than we had understood, and, as a small preschool, Clinton Path would be unable to pay the level of rent the space can command over the long term. That led the task force to begin to explore a more ambitious plan for space renovation and active recruitment of larger preschools to consider sharing renovated space. We are encouraged by the possibility that a longer-term approach could result in dramatically improved space for our own RE programming AND substantially greater rental revenue from a compatible enterprise. We will keep the Parish Board and congregation apprised of our work – and welcome others to join the effort!

Our building can be an asset! An education space? A performance space? An incubator for budding cooking businesses? We can share the building with the community in creative ways and reap the benefits if we put our talent, time and treasure into the effort.

Many members and friends noted in the Transition Team survey their willingness to help expand rental opportunities. We are planning a meeting before the summer for those members of the community who are interested in helping. We’ll share our ideas to date and ask you for your ideas to broaden our thinking. There will be opportunities for both short and long term involvement! If you’d like to find out more, please let our church administrator, Sonya Abbott, know of your interest and she’ll put you in touch with Sara Warren.

AFFILIATE MINISTER

To the First Parish in Brookline Community:

This past year this congregation has again served as a platform for opportunities for my ministry, and I am very thankful. Always I'm grateful for a chance to lead worship, which I did on February 19th, on the theme of "all kinds of love," which for me means exploring our compassion using the lens of our seventh principle, devotion to living in and honoring the interconnected web of all existence.

Again, I offered three pet bereavement groups during the past church year, in October, December, and March. The average number of participants is five, which turns out to be the right size for a group designed to offer mutual support for an often disenfranchised grief.

My role as a support to this congregation, included to a pastoral call in April. My dog, Maisie, and I paid one last visit to Tom Collins, a friend and lover of animals extraordinaire. Invited, Maisie curled up next to him on his hospice bed, enjoying Tom's gentle company one last time.

Early in my animal care ministry, two individuals seeking spiritual support had their hearts that broke open in such a way that they asked me for spiritual coaching (spiritual direction), as they sought deeper meaning in life, love, and loss. I continue to offer spiritual direction, another way I'm fulfilled in service.

In addition to leading worship and doing weddings elsewhere, I led a summer worship service at First Parish in Brookline on August 21. A shared Lughnasa/Blessing of the Animals service, open to the community, we celebrated the Celtic time of harvest along with the many gifts our animal companions. Of course, we all circled and blessed them. During Joys and Sorrows, we also remembered those who had been so important to us and had passed away. Matt Laurence provided a wonderful band, and I always enjoy the way our animal friends respond!

Being of service to this community is an honor.

Respectfully and gratefully submitted,
Rev. Eliza Blanchard
Affiliate Minister

COMMUNITY MINISTRY: Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry outreach has continued and grown in the past two years, with the base group at Northeastern University growing and flourishing even as Rev. MaryHelen Gunn's role in their Center for Spirituality, Dialogue, and Service expanded to include the role of Spiritual Advising Outreach Coordinator. Rev. MaryHelen preached in our pulpit on November 13, 2016, with several of her students present; it was an historic Sunday as it was the first Sunday after election day. A powerful highlight of the year, was traveling with four UU students to the herstoric Women's March on Washington in January.

In addition, in the past year this ministry has received funds to offer and provide UU Ministry to support an emerging UU student group at Olin College in conjunction with First Parish in Needham (Rev. Catie Scudera, Senior Minister). Rev. MaryHelen was also awarded travel and lodging support from the UUA to participate in a first-ever Seminar and Retreat for Community Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship, May 5-7 in California.

ARCHIVES PROJECT

Chair/Project Manager: Elizabeth Cousins

Members: None

Purpose / Mission Statement: To organize and describe First Parish records.

Accomplishments Past Year:

- Collaborated with Brookline Public Library, Brookline Historical Society and other Brookline entities to apply for an LTSA grant for Archival Preservation Assessment.
- Accessioned 2 sets of records.
- Assisted Karla Baehr with documentation of tankards places on auction.
- Assisted Keith Kirchoff with trying to find earliest Order of Service in our collection & in other repositories.
- Met with BPL Digitizing team to initiate Photographs metadata for inclusion in www.digitalcommonwealth.org
- Met with LTSA Grant-funded Preservation Specialist from NEDCC to review archival collections, what processing & descriptive work I've done, review physical and intellectual controls.

Tasks Next Year:

- Create and contribute metadata for photographs & illustrations of buildings, officials and parishioners.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Brookline Public Library et.al. on Preservation Assessment.

Thanking: Boston Public Library Digitizing Team and Digital Commonwealth, Brookline Public Library for assuming administrative oversight of the LTSA Grant.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Report to First Parish in Brookline Annual Meeting May 2017

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 and her assistant Kevin Hoskins – ably supported by custodians Kofi and Oppong Serebour – work together with us in this goal.

The year in review

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

- Carpentry and leaded glass repairs in Pierce Hall stairwell (\$7,264) - Sam & Clint
- New Sanctuary furnaces and controls (c. 17,000) - Will & Clint
- New music office and sanctuary window well covers (\$3,230) - Clint
- Repointing and reinforcement of the southwest buttress and the remaining top half of the northwest buttress of the Sanctuary tower (in process, c. \$30,500) - Clint

This past fiscal year, the annual B&G funding from the endowment was \$40,000. Note that Buildings and Grounds is funded by a dedicated reserve account. Our spending in any given year may be more or less than our endowment transfer. The account may be supplemented by grants and special donations. We always maintain a minimum amount for unexpected expenditures.

We continue to monitor the Tower. We remain committed to restoring the entire tower as soon as possible to address structural and envelope integrity issues. Funding for this remains an open issue but could be assisted by a capital campaign.

For many years, we have been members of Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light, an education and advocacy group, which also provides us with advice on green projects as needed.

Upcoming projects

We are guided by a 20-year maintenance plan that allocates costs for specific items on a yearly basis. We also continue to address our deferred maintenance, new safety issues, and accessibility and green projects. Our near-term projects include:

- More Sanctuary masonry projects - Clint

The 2018 fiscal year B&G funding remains at the reduced level of \$40 thousand.

Major capital projects

In addition to the long-term maintenance plan, the Building and Grounds Committee has identified building improvement initiatives beyond B&G's scheduled maintenance purview and budget. These were put forward as potential projects for consideration if a capital campaign were undertaken. A visioning session was held with the various Committee Chairs in October, 2013 at which the following improvement concepts were presented:

- Improve the accessibility and safety of the sanctuary entrance
- Improve the outdoor areas to be part of the spiritual and social life of the Church
- Make "green" sustainability improvements that lessen our carbon footprint such as solar electricity

- Be good stewards of the building by repairing the Tower
- Create more classrooms and accessible toilet rooms in the ground floor of Parish Hall
- Renovate Pierce Hall to better meet the multifunctional space needs of the Church
- Renovate the Sanctuary to improve worship experience

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, Chair
 Will Spears, Tim Dailey and Sam Dennis

BUILDING OPERATIONS **2016 - 2017**

Building Operations, according to the budgeted line items, encompasses overseeing the recurring daily operating expenses incurred throughout the year: from insurance to ground maintenance, fuel oil, snow removal, utilities and unplanned repairs that are always a surprise. This will be my ninth year overseeing general building operations.

Another year of leaking pipes needing replacement, heating issues meaning coats had to be worn in order to work, and it goes without saying that we have ice and snow to contend with during the winter months. Old buildings, old systems, always something to be repaired or replaced.

Fortunately, on Sundays, at least most of them, no one knew about the issues of the week and everyone is toasty and warm. Of course, there was the time a leaking pipe blew out the kitchen lights for a week or more, but many came to the rescue with inventive ways of providing light when needed in that space. The sanctuary heating system was upgraded and can now be controlled by the office via a computer program.

Our grounds continued to be maintained by an outside service that includes not only mowing and plowing, but both spring and fall cleanup, which is major since the building is surrounded by many trees. We also have an outside contractor that oversees the roof maintenance and will come and deal with interior issues when called.

Thankfully, in addition to so many of you that help keep First Parish a pleasant, friendly and safe building, open not only to its members, but to the public at large, we have two custodial individuals that work very hard. They are Boateng (Kofi) Serebour and his brother Oppong. Boateng is here on Sunday mornings, then Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. He does the bulk of our everyday maintenance and works between 32 and 34 hours a week. His brother Oppong is here on Sunday afternoons only and assists with hospitality cleanup and any extra setups needed as Sundays are often our busiest day. They are very kind, gentle individuals and between the two of them, First Parish is well cared for.

We are a tiny village that works quietly behind the scenes to keep First Parish a welcoming building, vibrantly alive. I certainly could not accomplish any of the tasks without all of you. Thank you all for your continued assistance and support.

Gratefully submitted,
 Sonya A. Abbott
 Parish Administrator

CANVASS (ANNUAL PLEDGE CAMPAIGN) TEAM

Co-chairs: Bob Williamson and Karla Baehr

Other participants: Laura Hatfield (for Parish Board), Rev Rebecca, and Anne Modena

The Foundation for our Work:

Traditionally, the Canvass Team has been charged with leading the annual pledge commitment campaign for First Parish, aka “The Canvass”. This year the Team built a new foundation for future campaigns:

- Stewardship is “caring for”; canvass contributions provide the foundation for caring
- We are a giving congregation; Sunday collections for causes demonstrate our spirit of generosity
- History informs us; data shows us the way to better informed giving
- Giving is personal; it is motivated by meaning and rewarded by personal connection

You can build that future by joining next year’s Team! See Karla or Bob to learn more about how you can contribute your talent and time to build a secure financial future for First Parish Brookline

Details of our Work:

This year we framed our work in the larger context of stewardship, the careful shepherding of First Parish resources of “time, treasure, and talent”. Laura Hatfield from the Parish Board joined the team and provided, among other valuable contributions, research support by dissecting trends and patterns in pledging over the past six years to guide our work.

In the larger context of stewardship, we worked to raise members’ awareness of dimensions of stewardship. To that end, we supported the Transition Team to pose a series of questions about church finances in a congregation-wide survey. Survey results are guiding leaders on a range of issues ranging from renting more space more frequently (strong support) to selling legacy assets (mixed feelings) to the importance of achieving financially sustainable over the long term (strong support).

To support efforts to expand members’ spirit of generosity, we collaborated with the Parish Board, Finance Committee and Social Action Team to launch an experiment of giving the entire Sunday plate collection once per month to a social action/social justice organization designated by a First Parish committee or group, e.g., choir, youth, social action. Early results have been encouraging: our contributions to organizations have, on average, doubled from the average over the past four years, and overall plate collections on “non-social justice Sundays” have also risen.

The Canvass Team built its plan for the 2017 canvass around several findings from Laura Hatfield’s research into trends and patterns in pledging. Noteworthy findings included:

1. First Parish remains overly dependent on a relatively small number of large pledgers: more than 50% of annual pledges come from fewer than 20 households.
2. A large number of households make very modest annual pledges relative to their apparent wherewithal: 8% of 2016 pledgers made pledges of less than the dues First Parish pays on their behalf to the UUA.
3. A household’s initial decision about how much to pledge generally establishes its long-term giving because subsequent years’ pledges are typically only incremental changes from the original amount.

As a result, we set these goals for the 2017 Canvass:

1. Increase the percentage of households that increase their pledge over their prior year's pledge.
2. Move the pledge distribution "to the right," i.e., more low pledging households move to moderate and more moderate to higher.
3. Complete the campaign in time for the Parish Board to be able to recommend a budget for 2017-18 that is based on realistic pledge estimates.

Recognizing that interim periods rarely result in increased pledging, we set our target at \$420,000, the same target as 2016, about \$13,000 more than was actually pledged for 2016. We decided on the theme "Now, More than Ever" as a way to call members' attention to three different realities: the 300th anniversary of First Parish being celebrated in April 2017, our interim ministry, and widespread despair over the results of the 2016 elections. Rather than make specific recommendations for pledge amounts we decided to rely on sharing information to support discernment:

- We included a "worksheet" in the materials we sent to households for the March campaign launch that asked members to start their discernment process by asking themselves what engagement at First Parish means to them;
- We included information about UUA guidelines for giving and the 2016 pledge distribution pattern for First Parish; and,
- We pointed out that achieving financial sustainability through pledging would require roughly a 13% increase in each household's giving over both of the next two years.

2017 Innovations

We introduced three innovations in 2017:

1. On-line pledging,
2. Customized outreach to families with children in our RE program who were not members or otherwise engaged at First Parish, and
3. Personalized email reminders and acknowledgements.

Through Laura Hatfield's testimonial from the pulpit, we also (re)introduced planned giving with the intention of developing a system and process next year to encourage and support planned giving as another component of sound stewardship.

Results of our Work

As of the writing of this report on May 1st, we can report these results:

1. 153 households (241 individuals) pledged \$430,171
2. 2017 pledges exceed our target of \$420,000 by more than \$10,000!
3. 56% of returning households were willing and able to increase their pledge; the median increase was 17%, with increases ranging from +2% to +400%
4. Another 31% of returning households were willing and able to sustain their prior year pledge level.
5. 23 new households made pledges for 2017, 8 of whom are returning members!

Next year, Bob will step down from the Canvass Team and Karla will be recruiting new team members. Both of us have found the outreach involved in the Canvass process a deeply satisfying

experience, and encourage others who share the desire to connect more deeply with First Parish members – both new and old – to give serious consideration to joining the Canvass Team.

Special thanks go to:

- **Ellie Boynton** for posting Canvass materials promptly and, most critically, installing and managing our new on-line pledge and contribution system.
- **Laura Hatfield** for her detailed analysis of trends and patterns in pledging over the past decade that provided important insights and guidance for our efforts.
- **Sonya Abbott** for sharing history, preparing twice weekly reports on progress, and attending to the details of the campaign so carefully.
- **Lori Day, Laura Hatfield** and **Bob Williamson** for their testimonials
- **Anne Modena** for her early support in helping craft the Canvass message for 2017
- **Rev. Rebecca** for her steadfast support throughout the process, and for sharing insights and expertise from her earlier career as a fundraiser in the nonprofit world.

Submitted with gratitude and new-found appreciation for this community,

Bob Williamson and Karla Baehr

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

BOOK CLUB 2016-2017

Book Club continued to offer a wide variety of reading opportunities; lively, often amusing discussions; and delicious, theme-related baked goods... Food for thought, both literal and figurative!

Our reading list for the year:

- *Einstein's Dreams* - Alan Lightman
- *The Light Between Oceans* – M.L. Stedman
- *Me Before You* – Jojo Moyes
- *Soul of an Octopus* Sy Montgomery
- *Hoot* – Carl Hiassen
- *Everything I Never Told You* - Celest Ng
- *The Sympathizer; A Novel* – Julia Viet Thanh Nguyen
- *A Man Called Ove* – Fredrick Backman
- *The Third Reconstruction* – Rev. William J. Barber II with John Wilson-Hartgrove*
- *Rule of the Bone* – Russell Banks
- *Lab Girl* – Hope Jahren

*UUA Common Read

The Book Club generally meets the first Sunday of every month. We advertise our meetings and reading choices in the weekly bulletins, orders of service announcements, and monthly newsletters. Join us if a book selection appeals to you! If you've enjoyed a book and would like to discuss it with a group, let us know the title, and we'll put it on our list. Contact Julie Horvath if you'd like to be added to our mailing list.

POETRY CIRCLE

The Poetry Circle has just completed its eighth year! Our circle expanded to include new members, and we enjoyed discussing poems written by an eclectic group of poets:

- FP Poetry Circle (members' poems) – “Celestial Music” Summer Service
- Theodore Roethke – Pulitzer Prize and two-time National Book Award winner; one of the most influential poets of the 20th century
- Stanley Kunitz - Superlative teacher and two-time Poet Laureate of the United States
- Linda Hogan – Contemporary Native American poet, essayist, novelist, and environmentalist
- Wislawa Szymborska - Polish writer, translator, and winner of the 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature
- Leonard Cohen – Recently deceased Canadian singer, songwriter, musician, poet, novelist, and painter.
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson - Victorian-era poet whose poems many of us can quote!
- Pablo Neruda – 20th century Chilean poet, diplomat, and politician
- Clemens Stark – Contemporary Oregon carpenter-poet and educator
- For May: Frank Bidart - Acclaimed poet and Wellesley College professor; former colleague of our own Ann Congleton!

Each poet is chosen by a Poetry Circle member on a rotating basis. We meet the second Monday of the month at 4:00 PM. Please consider joining us for interesting discussions and great company! Contact Sue Andrews if you'd like to attend.

VESPERS

Leaders: Jamie Redgrave and Anne Copeland, with all regular attendees sharing in leadership of services

Participation: Approximately 7-10 people attend each Vespers Service.

Description: On the second Sunday of each month (5-6pm or, seasonally, 6-7pm), an opportunity for a small, contemplative lay-led vespers service has been offered to the First Parish community. Based on the ages-old practice of marking the end of the day with communal reflection, this service revolves around simple music, guided meditation, and periods of silence and quiet reflection focused on a unifying theme. In a candle-lighting ritual, attendees are invited to name those who are physically absent but on their minds and in their hearts. Most services this year included a co-leader from the group, who chose the theme and readings and helped run the service. Themes in 2016-17 paralleled the monthly church themes (e.g., Gratitude, New Beginnings, All Kinds of Love, Stewardship, Transformation, Inspiration).

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE EVENTS

Child Dedications

- June 2017 Oliver McIntire

Graduating High School Seniors June 2017

Olivia Dobkin
Marisa Fuller
Christopher Marcus
Anita Mayfield-Sheehan
Clayton Mears
A. Clare Murphy-Putnam
Kira Shannon

Memorials / Life Celebrations

- September 2016 Ed Ambrose (*in Boston, MA*)
- October 2016 Judith Grohe (*in Newburyport, MA*)
- November 2016 Robert Bartels
- April 2017 Tom Collins

Ordination

- September 2016 Rev. Erica Richmond

DEACONS' REPORT

2016-2017

Members: Bill Dwyer, Sheila Hussey, Laura Walters, Midge Wilcke, Ray Wellbaum, Bob Williamson, and Jim Womack

Purpose: The Deacons, approved by the Parish Committee, are the designated elders of the parish. They act as the church's institutional memory and support the wellbeing of the congregation by being a strong presence in institutional life.

Year's Activities:

- We assisted our Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Rebecca Bryan, in the celebration of four communion services. Attendance at the communion services continues to grow as participants find comfort in the quiet ritual of song and spoken word and the sharing of bread and wine.
- We met with Rev. Rebecca three times this calendar year to share our institutional memory and to give our support as she leads First Parish in its transition.
- The Deacons continue to serve as ushers at memorial services. We were honored to assist at the memorial services for several leaders in the Brookline community.
- On a very happy note, in September, the Deacons participated in the ordination of a life-long member of the First Parish community, Erica Richmond, daughter of Suzanne Federspiel and Clint Richmond.
- The Deacons are always available to meet with the youth in our Religious Exploration Program. This spring Sheila Hussey met with the children and their parents to discuss "Who is Your Neighbor?" in the program's Neighboring Faiths class.
- Chris Beasley, a long-time member and significant contributor to the vitality of First Parish, resigned as Deacon as a result of retiring to Maine. Chris goes with our thanks and best wishes.
- Ray Wellbaum was appointed Deacon by the Parish Committee in recognition of his service and dedication to First Parish over the years.

Next Year: We are committed to being a steadfast source of strength and support to Rev. Rebecca Bryan in her interim ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Dwyer

DIGITAL MINISTRY TEAM

FPB continues our commitment to expanding our ministry through social media and other forms of digital ministry.

We have continued to use our First Parish Facebook page to promote events, advertise our worship services, post links to sermons and videos from worship, engage the larger community in our social justice work and partnerships, and enjoy inspirational messages including Rev Rebecca's weekly Spiritual Sustenance. We still hope to cross the 500 friends threshold before summer and grow from there next year.

The church website was updated over the summer thanks to Ellie Boynton and saw increased usage this year. We used the website to highlight upcoming events and added a link to racial justice activities happening in the community. The information for the weekly events comes from the newsletter and weekly church email. The information for the racial justice activities is provided each week by two members of the Diversity Caucus –Almas Dossa and Martha Leader.

We also began to use two additional apps; WhatsApp and Signal. Both of these are used to connect members when we are at social justice events including the Women's March. Many thanks to Nathan Freitas for helping to get those off the ground.

This year, we experimented with having slides for worship projected during the services. Slides include words to responsive readings, and hymns as well as powerful images that accompany many of the liturgical elements. This was done generally two times per month by Scott Ullrich. It has received very positive feedback from members.

Respectfully Submitted

Ellie Boynton, Scott Ullrich with Sonya Abbott, Kristen McIntire, and Rev Rebecca

DIVERSITY CAUCUS **Annual Report 2017**

Co-Chairs: Lilly Marcelin and Gene Thompson-Grove

Members: Karla Baehr, Ellen Blaney, Almas Dossa, Madeline Fine, Ann Gilmore, Kathryn Kirshner, Martha Leader, Ronald Wilkinson, Bob Williamson, Rev. Rebecca Bryan

Diversity Caucus Charter

Mission - To empower First Parish in Brookline to nourish and be nourished by the rich diversity of people with whom we are all blessed in the congregation, in greater Boston, and the wider world.

Vision - We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the interdependent web of which we are all a part. Therefore, we aspire to become an inclusive community, where people can show up as their whole selves to be together in authentic ways. We reaffirm our commitment to our journey as a congregation to become an intentionally anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multi-cultural, beloved community.

Origin of our Name - About a year after formation, members of the group changed the name from the *Diversity Team* to the *Diversity Caucus*. “Caucus” is an indigenous, Algonquian word which means, “lifting all the voices.” It signifies a group process where all present have the opportunity to speak and important decisions are discussed until a consensus is reached. This name was adopted because Caucus members aspire to this form of inclusive, discussion-based, consensus-seeking process. They do so in honor of, and in gratitude for, the Algonquian speaking peoples who have inhabited this land for thousands of years. It is also worth noting that “caucus” rhymes with “raucous,” which reminds us that this type of process is sometimes noisy and messy, and that insights and decisions don’t always evolve in an ordered, linear way.

We are currently in conversation about changing our name from “diversity” to “racial justice” or “racial equity.”

Overall Goals

Just as First Parish in Brookline became a GLBT Welcoming Congregation, the congregation has embarked on a journey to become a Multicultural, Anti-Racist Beloved Community. The goals of the Diversity Caucus are as follows:

- ❖ Have in place a long-term “landing place” at First Parish that is actively working to be inclusive and anti-racist, and that includes a critical mass of people of color.
- ❖ Help each other celebrate the richness of experience, deep appreciation of life, beloved relationships, and on-going advancement of justice that we discover, co-create, and share as we travel together on this sacred journey.
- ❖ Be a space for safe reflection.
- ❖ Support the congregation of First Parish in Brookline as it undergoes transformation and moves forward together.
- ❖ Work with others in the congregation to dismantle racial inequality where it exists at First Parish in Brookline and in the larger community.
- ❖ Support ourselves and others when we struggle with fear, backlash and getting stuck

We invite all at FPB to join us, with the understanding that a shared commitment to systemic change requires a sustained engagement. To build trust and community among Caucus members, and to deepen our awareness of and accountability for racial justice and equity, consistent participation over time is crucial.

2016-2017 Goals and Actions

Goal One: *Create a mechanism to invite and involve congregation members in Black Lives Matter-related activism, along with a stream of other activities and opportunities related to racial justice and equity; use media and social networking to engage and inform FPB congregation members.*

- Developed a web link on the FPB web site that provides information on Racial and Immigration Justice Take Action events
<http://firstparishinbrookline.org/social-action/racial-and-immigration-justice/>
- Currently working with a FPB member to utilize an app that will allow FPB members to connect with others around specific actions related to social action and racial justice
- Allied with Black Lives Matter Boston:
 - February 26th introductory talk by BLM Boston activist Karlene Griffiths Sekou
 - May 6th BLM level I workshop (9 am-1 pm): The Power of Now: Where Do We Go From Here? (Karlene Griffiths Sekou)
- Continued participation with the "Black Lives Matter" Certified Working Group (CWG) through UU Mass Action, consisting of congregants from several UU churches, which will foster networking among UU congregations to share experiences going forward and to reach out to more potential allies in our local communities

Goal Two: *Sponsor formal learning experience for FPB members ("Beloved Conversations" FPB-style, with different entry points).*

- With Immigration Justice, sponsored two films: The Invisibles (December 2), and The Invisible Crisis: The face of Forced Female Migration (April 30)
- Co-sponsored the congregation-wide reading of Rev. Dr. William Barber II's book, The Third Reconstruction and Debby Irving's book, Waking Up White
- Sponsored a 4-part series on Sunday mornings: Talking About Race (January-May), co-led by Jody Leader and Ron Wilkinson
 - Talking about race -- why is it so hard?
 - Discovering the meaning of unearned/white privilege: The GI Bill
 - Race, class and Hillbilly Elegy
 - The discomfort of trying to cross racial lines

Goal Three: *Continue community partnerships (formal and on-going) with current partners, including (but not limited to): SURJ, Jobs not Jails, the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, Centro Presente, the Chelsea Collaborative, and Boston New Sanctuary.*

- Participated in the Las Posadas Celebration – at the Chelsea Collaborative, December 20
- Participated in the Louis D. Brown Mother's Day Peace Walk, May 14
- To extend our efforts and live more fully into our commitment for racial justice and equity, we also took action in our local community:
 - Participated in State House actions focused on legislative reform related to dismantling mass incarceration, immigration justice and racial equity
 - Attended several Brookline Community Forums
 - Participating in the GARE Initiative in Brookline
 - Participating in BRJE group in Brookline

Goal Four: *Engage more members of the congregation more actively in UU Urban Ministry anti-racism, cross-race, and cross-faith activities.*

- With the Immigration Justice Committee, participating in Brookline Si (Supporting Immigrants), a Brookline-based interfaith organization focused on Immigration Justice
- Active member of the UU Ministry
- Attended the "Navigating Whiteness" day long workshop in November organized by Growing Racial and Cultural Equity (GRACE).

Goal Five: *Work with other committees at FPB as requested.*

- Made FPB more welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds (collaboration with Welcoming Committee and Deacons)
 - Made the foyer more welcoming with banners showing symbols of different beliefs
 - Updated the photographs
 - Put up banners of diverse religious traditions in various places
- Participated in planning some of the Children's Chapels and Justice Seeking Sundays (with the RE Committee)
- Participated on the Multi-Cultural Task Force charged with developing a scope of work for a consultant to work with FPB on *building multicultural capacity through exploration of our past, facilitating needed conversations, and learning from our own experience and the experience and wisdom of others who have done anti-racist, anti-oppression, and multicultural work.* (October to the present)
- Met with the Transition Team to analyze their congregation-wide survey data using an equity lens (January)
- Participated on the Finance Council, bringing a racial equity/racial justice lens to bear on the development of the budget (January-May)
- Participated on the Staffing Model Task Force (January-February)
- Part of the newly-formed Shared Leadership Group with Parish Board and Transition Team members as a response to white supremacy in the UUA (April to the present)
- Planned the Teach-In on White Supremacy service on April 30 (with the Worship Committee), and sponsored an informational table after the service

Goal Six: *Create time for spiritual renewal and time for us to connect and reflect on our own journeys on behalf of dismantling racism – in ourselves and around us*

Developed a policy statement on length of terms on the Caucus, as requested by the Parish Board:

Diversity Caucus Membership
March 27, 2017

We appreciate the Parish Board's interest in clarifying the membership processes and expectations of the Diversity Caucus. It led us to reconsider our mission and explore structures that would best support our evolving mission.

We see ourselves as an open and inclusive group: each year we invite interested members of the congregation to consider joining the Caucus. As a result of that invitation last spring, for example, we have 2 new members of the Caucus this year.

We see benefits to rotating co-leadership responsibilities: rotation helps develop leadership capacity and ensure that the perspectives of people of color are always front and center in our work. This year, for example, Ron Wilkinson and Almas Dossa stepped back into regular

membership after 3 years as co-chairs, and Lilly Marcelin and Gene Thompson-Grove stepped into the role of co-chairs.

We worry that rotating members on and off the committee every three years is not likely to work well for members of the Caucus or for the congregation as a whole.

1. We think the congregation needs the voices of people of color on its Diversity Caucus. There are still very few people of color in our congregation. Requiring that they rotate off the Caucus will likely leave the Caucus with few members of color.
2. It is important to have in place a long-term “landing place” at First Parish that is actively working to be inclusive and anti-racist, and that includes a critical mass of people of color. Requiring members of the Diversity Caucus to rotate off the Caucus would work against building and sustaining an effective landing place.
3. It is important that the Caucus has consistent participation over time, both for building trust and community among Caucus members, and for deepening awareness of and accountability for racial justice and equity within and beyond our walls. A shared commitment to systemic change requires a sustained engagement.
4. We think the Diversity Caucus can have as few as 6 members and as many as 12. If the number of people seeking to join the Caucus in a given year were to risk exceeding 12, long-term members of the Caucus are prepared to leave the Caucus.

Thank you for raising the question of whether the general First Parish model for committees of rotating terms should apply to the Diversity Caucus. It has made us reflect carefully on our mission and history. Please let us know if there are other factors or perspectives you would like us to consider as we all think through whether or not the general First Parish committee model of rotating terms should apply to the Diversity Caucus.

Gene Thompson-Grove & Lily Marcelin, Diversity Caucus co-chairs
Karla Baehr, Ellen Blaney, Almas Dossa, Madeline Fine, Ann Gilmore, Kathryn Kirshner, Martha Leader, Ron Wilkinson, and Bob Williamson

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

May 2017

Music Director: Keith Kirchoff, 2010-present

The Choirs: We had a very busy musical year this year, with exciting music nearly every Sunday! Both the Chancel and Chamber Choirs sang regularly, we welcomed several guest musicians, and the Children's Choir made two appearances.

Chancel Choir – The Chancel Choir consists of roughly 16-30 singers. All are volunteers with the exception of four paid section leaders. The choir welcomed many new members this year. All singers are welcome to join, and no prior experience is required. The choir, led by myself, Keith Kirchoff, continued to sing a varied repertoire of gospel, spirituals, ancient classical, modern classical, rock, folk, pop, Indian, African, Czech, and plainchant among other styles.

Chamber Choir – The only audition-only choir at First Parish, the Chamber Choir consists of a rotating roster of eight singers. Often singing difficult and challenging repertoire, these singers must be strong sight readers. The Chamber Choir sang on average once a 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, and three of the four accepted. We welcomed back soprano Elizabeth McIntire, alto Oriana Dunlop, and tenor Adrian Jones; baritone Joshua Dixon. In February, Oriana Dunlop moved back to Canada, and we hired JoAnna Pope in her place.

Assistants: Adrian Jones led choir rehearsals in my absence, and we welcomed three different piano accompanists to fill in on Sunday mornings: Ellie Boynton, Brian Friedland, Karl Henning, and Elaine Aveni.

Guest Musicians: We welcomed several guest musicians this year. Ben Swartz joined us for our 1717 historical service, The Butterfly Chorus were a guest ensemble on February 12; Jeannie Gagne and Stan Strickland joined our own Jon Hazilla for a special service of remembrance on February 19th; and pianist Brian Friedland joined us when I was away. All other guest musicians (excepting Christmas, see below) were drawn from the congregation.

Christmas: At Christmas, the choir was joined by a local Brass Quintet in celebration of our 300th anniversary.

Easter: At Easter, the Chancel Choir sang two Alleluias (by Randall Thomson and Jake Runestad), and was joined by the Children's Choir for the Introit.

300th Anniversary Celebrations: In recognition of our 300th Anniversary, we celebrated four special services honoring each of our centuries. Each of these services featured music that may have appeared at our church during that time. On September 25th, we offered a 1717-style service accompanied by string trio and featuring music written by colonial-era Boston composers; on December 4th, we offered an 1817-style service featuring music written by former Music Directors of First Church Boston (no music could be found by our own former Music Directors); and on March 12th, we offered a 1917-style service featuring music written by our own John Ross.

300th Anniversary Commission: To make our 300th Anniversary extra special, the church issued a national call for proposals to commission a composer to commemorate our anniversary. We received 71 applicants which I then reviewed and narrowed down to four finalists. The choir then voted on these final four, reviewing both the music and the proposed piece, and selected composer Dan Pinkston, who wrote a piece *Hope is the thing with feathers* that will be premiered on our June 4th worship service. We awarded him a \$500 prize. The entire adjudication process was blind.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT
MAY, 2017

This winter, First Parish voted updates in our by-laws, including eliminating the Leadership Development Committee and creating a Nominating Committee. In transitioning from the LDC to the Nominating Committee, we have been comprised of two previous members of LDC, Margie Beal and Suzanne Federspiel, a current Parish Board member, Alice Mark, and the immediate past chair of the Parish Board, Ann Dinsmoor. Rev. Rebecca joined us as an ex-officio member.

We convened in early March and solicited self-nominations from the membership, which proved to be very effective in helping identify interested people. The positions open this year follow, with the names of those this committee nominates for each position:

Moderator: Bob Williamson (continuing)

Alternate Moderator: Katherine Charette

Clerk: Alice Mark

Treasurer: Ben Davis (continuing)

Parish Board: Dave Demerjian
Charles Sandmel
Gene Thompson-Grove

Nominating Committee
Members-at-large: Melinda Maryniuk
Laura Walters
Ron Wilkinson

Submitted by Ann Dinsmoor for the committee:
Margie Beal, Ann Dinsmoor, Suzanne Federspiel and Alice Mark

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

2016-2017

Transition! Feels like the movie Fiddler on the Roof – where Tevye shouts to the heavens – Tradition! Transition, so as it was last year, so it has been this year. Transition seems to have become a FPB Tradition.

Now while I could repeat the same old, same old from prior year's reports, I think instead that this year I merely want to thank a number of individuals for their spirits, guidance and assistance.

First and foremost is our Administrative Assistant – Kevin Hoskins. Kevin primarily handled the bulk of the weekly order of service processing, entered weekly data from the membership coordinator, worked with the Religious Exploration team on registrations, listserv maintenance, and timely reports, in addition to tackling any project we tossed his way. He keeps me sane, along with all the staff he works closely with. Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, Kevin's position is being eliminated, but even prior to learning this, he had been making plans to return to school for his MBA, so all is well.

Now there are three wonderful individuals you work relatively quietly behind the scenes but are of tremendous help not only to me but more importantly to the congregation at large. They are Ellie Boynton, Paul McLean and Scott Ulrich. Ellie is our webmaster who is constantly tweaking, updating our website along with listening to my constant technical grips. Paul is our editor at large and press release guru. Scott handles our Facebook postings and has truly taken that to heart and has built it up wonderfully. Heartfelt thanks to both of you, dear ones.

I must truly thank our Pastoral Associates: Ellie Boynton, Jeff Cadow, Madeline Fine, Jon Hazilla, Julie Horvath, Paul McLean, Dorothy Richardson, Mary Rogers and Laura Walters. What an extraordinary group of gentle, kind, loving, caring individuals I've enjoyed learning from. Your love for this congregation and those in need is outstanding.

Deacons, yes the Deacons! You're there whenever I call and the need arises for a Memorial Service. I admire how you quietly handle the preparation for the Communion Services held throughout the year. Your congregational wisdom on many subjects is truly appreciated by me. Thank you, Bill Dwyer, Sheila Hussey, Laura Walters, Ray Wellbaum, Midge Wilcke, Bob Williamson and Jim Womack.

Who else, ah yes, Ann Dinsmoor! Your kind, always friendly smile and soft gentle voice I've missed since you've stepped down from being Parish Chair. Your wisdom on matters is over the top and your talents for creating and crafting wonderful useful wooden objects both here in the office, the sanctuary, and hallways ... and soon a new item is to be added I hear. I admire you for all you have done for First Parish and I'm sure will continue to do.

Now while there are so many others, Finance Committee, Canvass Team, Buildings & Grounds, all of you, as a matter of fact, are wonderful, but I wanted you who are reading this to know that the above folks are the ones that I've worked very closely with this past year and gratefully so.

Last, but not least ... there are other staff members that I personally work with - Rev. Rebecca, Rev. Eliza, Rev. MaryHelen, Keith, Kristen and Boateng - you are truly a great team. Words don't do justice and so all I can say is thank you for helping me do what truly couldn't be done without you.

Well it has been another year, twelve years as of August 2017. First Parish is truly in Transition, so who knows where that will lead any of us? May the road ahead be guided by wisdom, thoughtfulness and love for all here and outside these walls.

Respectfully submitted,
Sonya A. Abbott
Parish Administrator

PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES

- Care Coordination:** (Laura Walters /Julie Horvath) providing help with meals, rides and chores.
- Pastoral Care Associates:** Offer a compassionate listening ear and work directly with Rev. Rebecca
- Leadership:** Jon Hazilla, Chair
- Meeting:** 4th Tuesday every month 7-8:15
- Membership Type:** Voluntary for Care Coordination: Pastoral Care Associates
By invitation of Rev. Rebecca
- Membership Term:** Open (9 members)
- E-mail:** Care@firstparishbrookline.org
- Accomplishments:** Healing Circle /Transition Service, Blue Friday Service, Pastoral Care Recognition Service, Workshop: *The Power Of Yes*, Assisting with Candles of Joys and Concerns, summer care coverage 10 weeks , Small Group Ministry * Care Ministry Brochure, Retreat/Reentry fall 2016, fall 2017

Rev. Rebecca Bryan
Jon Hazilla
Jeff Cadow
Dorothy Richardson (S.G.M. coordinator)*
Julie Horvath
Laura Walters
Madeline Fine
Paul Mclean
Mary Rogers
Ellie Boynton

Love and Blessings,
Jon

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE - 2016-2017

Members: Rich Day, co-chair, Nathan Freitas, co-chair, Jeff Cadow, Elizabeth McIntire, Karley Ausiello, Anne Brown, Anne Harvey Kilburn, Margaret Williams, Jonathan M. Richardson, and Jaime Kim.

Opening Thoughts

Reflecting on living through a year of a Religious Exploration program without a paid Director or Coordinator supporting it, we can say that we are pleased with how well it has gone. It is only because of the support, commitment and faith in our fellow parishioners, that this could be pulled off successfully. It was not an ideal situation, but life never is...and the experience of living and working through a mild crisis with a community always strengthens bonds and reveals new truths.

After the unexpected departure of the DRE, there was obvious concern and many questions about how would we proceed. At the basic level, the co-chairs of the RE Committee were empowered and supported to act as interim DRE's, being brought into discussions and decisions that previously only the DRE would have been a part of. This provided the flow of information and action that was primarily necessary to ensure a smooth continuation of day-to-day operations. The balance of the skillsets between the RE co-chairs, and their relaxed, good natured attitudes (heh!) helped balance out the obvious additional stress and workload the situation created.. Support from the minister and existing office staff was also invaluable in making the transition work smoothly, and their enhancing participation in the REC was appreciated. In the long run, dedicated paid staff support for RE is necessary, but for this year, it was manageable.

One question was "Would there be an interim DRE hired, or some other paid staff to temporarily take on the workload?" Possibly, if the right person could be found. It turned out, that there never was the right person or opportunity to bring someone on. Fortunately, due to the collaborative effort between the REC members and co-chairs, the FPB staff, and other members of the parish who stepped up, we made it through without any additional help. It was an enlightening experience to more deeply understand where the DRE is critically needed...and where perhaps there is redundancy with staff and volunteers. If anything, the streamlined staffing created deeper integration between the REC and other parts of the community.

Another questions was "How would we handle all of the logistics and organization duties for special services, supporting teachers, families, and so on?" Again, the answer lie in various people stepping up to fill these shoes. Families, Rev. Rebecca, the staff, REC liaisons, the Membership Coordinator and committee, and others provided support as requested or needed in a variety of situations. Logistics for special events and services were handled by identifying volunteer leader "bottom liners" for these services, which went very well, and allowed people to shine in new ways they had not been provided the chance to before.

In conclusion, we have a great deal of organizing capacity, talent and creativity in the parish, which we were able to utilize this year to mitigate the absence of a DRE. As we move towards bringing in a new RE-focused staff member, we look forward to coordinating our efforts, to greater success, efficiency and happiness for all.

By the Numbers

We enrolled **105** children and youth who were taught by **37** volunteer teachers, and one paid teachers (in nursery and preschool). Average Sunday class attendance was **46%**.

The Neighboring Faiths groups visited nine communities, and Challenge supported three youth and mentors in their process.

We held four Justice Seeking Sunday events and four Children's Chapels. While not formally an REC event, we supported the Christmas Pageant which had **59** children participate. We also had approximately 5 dozen donuts eaten off a string at the Halloween party, and 3 dozen eggs rolled, tossed and smashed for Easter.

Classes/curriculum included: Nursery; Me & My World (preschool); Spirit Play; Moral Tales; Toolbox of Faith, Neighboring Faith, OWL (Our Whole Lives – a part of the three year Coming of Age program); Challenge and the "YAKA" Youth Group.

RE Committee Goals

- Provide a welcoming and safe environment for children and youth so that they think of First Parish as their church home.
- Intentionally support child-child and child-adult relationships so that each child and youth is known by name by other children and adults in the congregation.
- Teach children and their families about UU religion (including UU heritage, theology, the 7 principles and 6 sources).
- Engage members of the congregation in understanding and participating in the faith formation of our children and youth.
- Hold teacher enrichment events.
- Organize and run "Children's Chapel" and "Justice Seeking Sunday" events in the chapel simultaneously with the 11:00 sanctuary worship service.

RE Committee Covenant

- We covenant to grow in right relationship.
- We covenant to infuse joy into the process and content of our work.
- We covenant to create and adhere to practices that support reaching our program and personal goals.
- We covenant to acknowledge our humanity, and offer forgiveness to each other and ourselves.

Accomplishments

1. We managed most of the year without a DRE, though great effort by all in management, handling day-to-day issues, organizing special events, and beyond.
2. We held nearly monthly meetings, with agendas, note-taking and action items.
3. Created and managed an RE Calendar, which lays out the tasks of the RE Committee month by month, coordinated with the primary parish calendar
4. Successfully recruited and supported teachers and volunteers throughout the year
5. Provided paid staff for the nursery/toddler room, and supported development of regular activities and plans to handle both younger and older children
6. While not an RE activity, we did support the Halloween Party which provided older kids with the opportunity to create a "haunted church" for the younger RE kids.
7. Provided teacher training for Spirit Play curriculum. (No Nate - no SP training this year)
8. Facilitated class breakfasts, potlucks and other opportunities for RE classroom teachers, kids and parents to interact outside of the Sunday morning classroom.
9. Planning to hold an end-of-the-year party for teachers.
10. Encouraged all RE families to participate in the Walk for Peace on Mother's Day.

Challenges

1. A job description was created and posted for an RE support (“floater”) position to assist with childcare, classroom management and other duties. However, we have not yet been able to hire for this position. We should review how and where we do job postings and recruitment, as well as how competitive our pay is. We should also consider creating more volunteer roles for this kind of need.
2. There were some issues with large class size in Moral Tales and Toolbox, but this was mostly in the fall when attendance was the fullest. It was also later mitigated through extra volunteer help. The general variability of attendance is a clear indicator that having floating Sunday RE resources or “quarterbacks” is an essential part of the operations of the program, to handle unexpected need.
3. The nursery and toddler rooms continue to be difficult to recruit consistent volunteers for. This is partly due to the fact that many of the families are new, are not familiar with the volunteer expectations, are not members, or are within their initial window of not being required to volunteer. There are also many families who have older children, and the parents are already volunteering in other ways. Some of this need is mitigated by having our paid staff position here, which is a critical role (see next point).
4. The paid nursery/toddler staff person has indicated this will be her last year, and thus, we need to hire someone new for fall 2017, or find some other way to staff the position. Given #1 and #3 challenges, we need to ensure we pay attention to this over the summer.

Religious Educator Search Committee

In the fall of 2016, a Task Force was formed at the request of the RE Committee and the Parish Board to review the Director of Religious Education position and make recommendations to them going forward.

Upon research and review of this position as compared to the needs of FPB, it was determined that what is most needed at this time and for the foreseeable future is a Coordinator of the program, not a Director.

The process is underway as this report goes to print and the hope is that the position will be filled with a start date of August.

Members on the Search Committee: Ann Dinsmoor, Nathan Freitas, Michael Monroe, Mitra Morgan, Matt O’Rourke, Sarah Griffen and Rev Rebecca Bryan

SOCIAL ACTION ANNUAL REPORT

Co-Chairs: Ellen Blaney and Clint Richmond

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

Our Vision: Our vision is for our congregation to live into the Seven Principles of our faith both inside the church and beyond our walls. And, in following our vision, that First Parish in Brookline be seen in the wider community as a place of active engagement in social justice, where people learn about and respond to critical issues and situations as a spiritual commitment. We look forward to continuing to tap the energy, interest, passion and compassion of our ever-evolving congregation and to join together at First Parish in Brookline in helping to make a better world.

Our Actions: We are first guided by our UU spiritual principles and by our congregational mission: Called by Love, Sustained by Community, Committed to Justice. In the face of so much injustice and opportunity, we focus on three thematic initiatives: **Standing on the Side of Love, Economic Justice, and the Environment.** We also strive to build upon and integrate our efforts with the initiatives of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UU Mass Action Network, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry. Typically, over half of our congregation's adults and youth participated in some kind of Social Action activity. And we contributed over \$17,000 to support the work of other justice-seeking organizations. We also integrated social action and worship in four Sunday services focused on racial, immigration and climate justice. These included dedicated collections to support the missions of our community partner organizations.

Standing on the Side of Love:

We fought HIV and AIDS at the Harbor to the Bay bike ride from Boston to Provincetown. The First Parish team consisted of riders and pit crew of all ages and raised \$10,000 in this all-volunteer, grass-roots fundraiser. We held a bake sale, rode, and we supplied and ran a pit stop. Thanks to Bijan Etemad-Gilbertson, Madeline Fine, Rich Day and Tara Washburn for leading this year's efforts. The next ride is September 23, 2017.

We supported racial justice in Brookline, including standing with firefighter Gerald Alston, and gathering signatures for the Town Meeting resolution to bring in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

We reached out to the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center following Presidential Executive Orders calling for a Muslim travel ban.

Our special monthly plate collection recipients included the YoFES (Youth and Family Enrichment Services), a non-profit serving the Haitian American community here in Boston; and Youth 2 Youth: Young Adults Uniting to End Homelessness organization, which runs a shelter at First Parish in Cambridge.

We had a large contingent in the Women's March for America both here and in Washington D.C. Anne Copeland organized local efforts, which we joined as an official Community Partner.

We walked in witness and support. In May, thanks to the leadership of Liz Martin and Carol Spitzer, we sustained our multi-generational presence at the Mother's Day Walk for Peace and against gun violence. We have already raised over \$600 for the sponsor, the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. In June, we look forward to the Boston Aids Walk, and with continuing the energy from RE and the Youth, for Boston Pride Parade on June 10. Thanks to Emily Cherry and Nathan Freitas for organizing our Pride participation.

We stood against mass incarceration in partnership with UU Mass Action and SURJ.

We supported immigration justice. This year the Immigration Justice Committee (Corazones Sin Fronteras / Hearts without Borders) expanded its membership and extended its focus, as threats to immigrant communities intensified under the new president's administration, to include sanctuary efforts within and beyond FPB. We are guided by a vision to be in community with one another, to keep the "borders" of our hearts and church open, to take our cues from the missions of community partners Centro Presente, the Chelsea Collaborative and other local immigrant rights organizations, to practice cultural humility and radical hospitality, to raise consciousness and encourage action at FPB through educational events and partnering opportunities, to respond to current immigration issues in the larger community, and to collaborate for immigration justice with UU congregations and other faith groups in Brookline and greater Boston.

Co-Chairs: Ellen Blaney and Tania Erlij

Members: Jessica Aguilera-Steinert, Susan Caplan, Wendy Estrada, Jessica Firing, Ann Gilmore, Gerry Leader, Jody Leader, Martha Leader, Sally Moore, Ron Sheffer, and James Shillaber

Activities and Events at First Parish in Brookline:

- Hosted RAICES training event to raise awareness and increase support of women and children in family detention centers
- Formed and led sanctuary working group to discern on considerations for offering sanctuary at FPB.
- Participated in bilingual worship service on immigration justice and talkback with Jennifer Hernández of Centro Presente.
- Co-sponsored with the Diversity Caucus *Los Invisibles* film and discussion including commentary from Patricia Montes and Jennifer Hernández of Centro Presente and testimony from a community member
- Organized Thanks/Giving winter clothing from FPB in solidarity with community members of the Chelsea Collaborative
- Participated in bilingual, intergenerational Las Posadas celebration in Chelsea led by the Chelsea Collaborative
- Hosted UU Mass Action/UUSC interfaith workshop on physical sanctuary including Zoom conversations with those who have provided and lived in sanctuary
- Co-led with members of the Parish Board and Transition Team a congregational conversation on what it would mean to offer physical sanctuary at FPB. Led Justice Seeking Sunday program on sanctuary with children of RE.
- Raised funds for Centro Presente with a special collection; and with an upcoming People's Café.

Actions beyond First Parish in Brookline:

- Participated in interfaith vigil outside Suffolk County Detention Center in support of those detained within and in solidarity with their family and community members
- Visited with men living in detention at Suffolk as Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM) spiritual caregivers
- Participated in the Safe Communities Act Coalition for a “sanctuary state” bill in Massachusetts and provided FPB organizational sponsorship of bill. This included visiting our legislators on UU Mass Action Lobby Day to increase their awareness and support of the Safe Communities Act
- Supported efforts in Brookline to become a Sanctuary Town that truly protects the safety of all people here
- Participated in vigils, marches and rallies in solidarity with community partner organizations and other immigrant rights groups to support the safety and well-being of all people in greater Boston
- Organized FP volunteers to provide meals for local Cosecha organizers
- Participated in the Chelsea Collaborative’s Know Your Rights door-knocking campaign to provide information to residents of Chelsea
- Joined Brookline Supporting Immigrants interfaith coalition for sanctuary and solidarity with 5 other congregations and 3 community organizations in Brookline
- Rapid Response: Joined the Chelsea Collaborative’s Community Response Strategy team. Co-organized training at Temple Sinai with Brookline SI coalition.
- Led in-reach to FPB volunteers for partnering relationship with St. Mary’s of Dorchester and secured Parish Board approval that FPB will be a “level 2” sanctuary congregation supporting physical sanctuary at St. Mary’s
- Visited Congressman Joe Kennedy’s office with organizers of Centro Presente and Alianza Americas and Honduran women’s rights activist Neesa Medina to discuss systemic conditions and root causes driving migration to U.S. from Central America
- Organized film discussion of *The Invisible Crisis: The Female Face of Forced Migration* with Centro Presente and members of Brookline SI interfaith coalition
- Provided ally accompaniment at ICE appointment and immigration hearing in solidarity and support with a Centro Presente community member and mother.

Environment Initiative:

Led by Rev. Rebecca, we sent several members to a MAICCA (Mass Interfaith Coalition for Climate Action) workshop.

Rev. Paul Langston-Daley of the UUSC preached on water rights at our third Social Action service of the year. We gave almost \$1000 in the special collection for the UUSC.

We financially support UU Ministry for the Earth on an annual basis. We co-sponsored a People’s Café, which raised almost \$5 thousand from the community for 350ma.org.

Economic Justice:

Public Education: We successfully advocated with UU Mass Action to stop ballot Question 2 that would have resulted in an inequitable expansion of charter schools.

We are a long-term partner with the UU Urban Ministry. We supported the UUUM with a special collection. We thank Karla Baehr for serving on the Board and leading our participation at its Annual Meeting.

We continue our commitments through Common Hope, which provides social service and educational support to low-income families in Guatemala. Since 2009, our congregation has been financing the education through high school of Dulce Maria Llanos Garcia, who is now 15; and many families sponsor individual children as well. Anne Copeland and Karen Kepler organized a holiday gift market that raised funds by selling goods from A Thread of Hope, a woman artisan cooperative in Guatemala.

We supported food banks. We donated the net fees from the Thanksgiving feast to two food banks. We continue to collect non-perishable foods for the Brookline Food Pantry all year long. Thanks to Ed Loechler and Leslie Spaneas for delivering our contributions once a month.

Overarching:

Spectrum of Resistance: Nanc Marks gathered a team that created an installation, which engaged us and challenged us to respond to political changes at the national level and around the world. This served as the inspiration for a sermon by Rev. Rebecca on this theme.

We value our ties to UU Social Action. We are congregational members of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and UU Mass Action. We participated in this year's UU Mass Action Advocacy Day in April to support bills relating to all our Social Action initiatives. We co-sponsored with the Book Group and the Diversity Caucus a discussion led by Rev. Rebecca of the *Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear* by Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove.

STAINED GLASS COMMITTEE

Mission Statement: *Our mission is to educate our congregation and the wider community of the origin and historic significance of our stained glass windows and to continue efforts to search out ways to raise the funds to repair, restore and safeguard the windows for future generations.*

Members: Susan Andrews, Jeff Cadow, David Cave, Sally Dwyer, Sheila Hussey, Frank Hutchins, Skye Kramer

During this interim time the Stained Glass Committee has felt it appropriate to reflect on our accomplishments since the committee was established at Annual Meeting May 17, 2009. The Lowell Memorial Window lancets are restored and installed, the Stained Glass brochure was edited and printed with colored pictures. A number of community events have highlighted the beauty of our sanctuary. This time from 2009 until now, the spring of 2017, can be considered a second phase of the ongoing restoration work that saw the restoration of the Train and Goddard Windows in 1999.

Members of the SGC have come to believe that the our lovely sanctuary and historical buildings are resources that add depth to worship experience as do the voices of the choir, heartfelt sermons, and testimonials. Is not the richness of diversity increased by inclusion of the good and the beautiful in our heritage?

The Stained Committee recommends as follows to the Board for consideration at the FPB meeting in June.

- Consider the SGC mission: still relevant? Should the SGC continue?
- Consider a use for the remaining SGC funds that might reflect an aesthetic purpose (SGC funds \$1,757.56 in a named fund under FP control)
- Recognize the value of present day communication to broadcast the attractiveness of our physical plant as a source of rental income by the following online approaches.
- Create a First Parish in Brookline Wikipedia article with links at least to Sarah Wyman Whitman's page as well as the stained glass page <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/stainedglass>
- Establish a LIS Virtual Tour of the windows and our historical building

Respectfully submitted
Sheila Hussey, Chair

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
2016-2017 Annual Report

Chair: Ellie Boynton

Members: Sonya Abbott and Rev. Rebecca Bryan

Mission Statement:

To help First 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 2016-2017:

- Found new IT support firm and implemented new phone and internet solution saving the church approximately \$500/month in ongoing costs.
- Enhanced website with more photos, Parish Committee reports, sermons (audio and text), and online payments for donations and Cape Cod retreat payments.
- Maintained website – added new pages for Ministerial Search, Cape Cod retreat, and Racial and Immigration Justice: Take Action this week.

Additional work included:

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

Goals for 2017-2018:

- Continued support of church staff and consideration of equipment upgrades/replacement.
- Implement better back-up, security, and anti-virus systems; improve functioning and security of local area network.
- Continued development and updating of website to meet congregation's needs, including possible addition of live streaming of sermons or entire services.
- Evaluate website and email hosting platform and possibly implement a new solution in hopes of eliminating email delivery problems for listservs and regular emails.

Thanks to...

- Scott Ullrich for taking photos and making recordings for inclusion in the website. Thanks also to Jody Leader for sending photos.
- Almas Dossa and Martha Leader for collecting and formatting content for the new Racial and Immigration Justice: Take Action this week page.
- Sonya Abbott for communication, support, and advice and Rev. Rebecca for guidance.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ellie Boynton

TREASURER'S REPORT
Fiscal Year 2017
(July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017)

1. Income update, as of 5/1/17

- a. Pledges received are largely on track for FY17, with \$313,138 pledge income received out of \$420,000 budgeted
- b. Plate collections were almost double our budgeted estimate, with \$11,899 received out of \$7,000 budgeted
- c. Program activity fees (OWL and Challenge RE fees) were down about 50%, with \$1,100 received out of \$3,000 budgeted. The Finance Committee recommends that the Parish Board consider a policy about RE fees, particularly for families with children in RE who are not FPB members.
- d. Building use rental income is \$13,685 received out of \$16,000 budgeted and is expected to come in slightly over budget by yearend.
- e. Overall income was at 91% budgeted

2. Canvass as of 5/1/17

- a. Pledges received for FY18 are \$428,571, exceeding our goal of \$420,000. This is the largest canvass in the history of FPB.

3. Expenses update as of 5/1/17

- a. Payroll expenses were down \$39,000 due to a vacancy in DRE as of Jan 2017
- b. A computer/software upgrade cost \$4,721 over budget, but is expected to yield long-term savings
- c. Fuel oil is \$11,000 below budget this winter
- d. Unforeseen repairs are estimated to be \$6,000 over budget
- e. Overall expenses were at 85% budgeted

4. Endowment Performance as of 3/31/17

- a. Grew from \$2,148,443 to \$2,220,386 due to silver sale and realized investment gain
- b. Endowment withdrawal was estimated to be 10.5% in FY17 and is now projected to be 9.7% as of 6/30/17

5. UUA Common Endowment Fund

- a. The annual yield of the UUA CEF was 6.4% in 2017, which compares with 5.4% in 2016.
- b. A comparable yield in domestic equity composites for 2017 was 12.2% and international equity composite of 6.6%.

FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

(Figures used are as of 5/5/17)

I. Mission

- a. Create, revise, and monitor financial policies of FPB
- b. Submit an annual operating budget to the Board and review its accuracy quarterly
- c. Advise the Board on matters of financial interest to the church, as appropriate
- d. Communicate financial information to the church community regularly and with transparency

II. Organization and Membership

- a. **Finance Committee** is a working committee charged with fulfilling the mission outlined in Section I. The committee will be comprised of: Treasurer (chair), past treasurer, canvass representative, 1-2 additional members of the board, 1-2 additional members of the congregation, ex officio: minister, parish administrator, and PC chair.
- b. **Membership in 2016-2017:** Sonya Abbott (ex officio), Sue Andrews (ex officio), Karla Baehr, Rev. Rebecca Bryan (ex officio), Benjamin Davis (chair), Steve Davis, Ann Dinsmoor (resigned, Jan 2017), Ryan Kim, Stacey Raczek, Kim Whelan
- c. **Finance Council** will be the church's mechanism for disseminating financial and budgetary information to key stakeholders, and for learning about the financial needs of different church committees and programs. In addition to the members of the Finance Committee, the Finance Council will be comprised of representatives from: buildings and grounds (Clint Richmond), religious exploration (Rich Day), diversity caucus (Gene Thompson-Grove), transition team (Anne Copeland and Mark Reynolds), social action council (Ellen Blaney), worship committee (Susan Larrabee), and welcome committee (Nick Peterson-Davis).

III. Calendar

- | | | |
|----|----------|-------------------|
| a. | 11/21/16 | Finance Committee |
| b. | 12/19/16 | Finance Council |
| c. | 1/17/17 | Finance Committee |
| d. | 3/20/17 | Finance Committee |
| e. | 4/18/17 | Finance Council |
| f. | 5/15/17 | Finance Committee |
| g. | 6/19/17 | Finance Committee |

IV. Coordination between Canvass and FY18 Budget

- a. A preliminary budget was drafted prior to the launch of Canvass in March so that information around staffing models and endowment draw could inform pledging
- b. The final FY18 Budget includes actual pledges received rather than estimates
- c. Congregational Conversation was held on 3/26/17 co-sponsored by the FC and Canvass

V. Policy for FPB Functioning as a Fiscal Agent

- a. On the advice of Tim Brennan, CFO for the UUA, FPB should be very thoughtful about serving in this capacity and adopt the following policies:
 - i. The sponsored organization's goals and mission should be compatible with the mission of FPB.

- ii. FPB should almost never serve as the fiscal agent for an individual, but rather for an organization.
- iii. If we serve as a fiscal agent for an organization, then we should annually review the balance sheet of the sponsored organization to be sure that the rules around 501c3 status are observed.

VI. Legacy Assets

- a. A report was received by the FC on 12/15/16 from Karla Baehr detailing the history of the Walnut St. property, the sale of the Hedge House, the stained glass (including the value and repair costs), and the silver.
- b. In 2016 the silver was sold at Christie's for \$63,000 and a second lot was sold in 2017 for \$17,600 and both sums were added to the endowment fund.
- c. Decision made 1/17/17 to defer resolution of legacy assets until Fall 2017, but still reviewing issues like organ and stained glass during transition.

VII. Capital Campaign

- a. Although our 300th anniversary might have been an occasion to launch a capital campaign, the FC recommended that a capital campaign should be deferred until we have a new settled minister, and until the distribution of pledges was shared across a wider range of households and incomes.

VIII. Social Action Special Collection Project

- a. In 2016, the Board authorized that for one Sunday each month, the plate collection would be donated to an organization identified by the Social Action Committee (or other committee)
- b. The plate collections were reviewed at the April FC meeting. Both the money collected for social justice organizations and the money not earmarked for these organizations rose by 28%.
- c. The Finance Committee recommended that this practice continue. Rev. Rebecca recommends a specific working group to identify appropriate causes and organizations.

IX. Activity Fees

- a. Because approximately 1/3 of the families with children enrolled in RE are not contributing members of FPB, the FC recommends to the board adopting a policy for charging fees for RE, either to all enrolled families or to non-member families. Activity fees were down 43% compared with the amount budgeted.

X. Alternative Building Use

- a. A working committee was commissioned by the Board to review longer term alternative building use as a means of securing dependable revenue (Karla Baehr, Bob Williamson, and Sara Warren).
- b. Such use might include durably housing a daycare facility, use of the kitchen for catering, and use of meeting rooms for educational conferences.
- c. Alternative building use would likely require investment in the building for the purpose of accommodating a tenant, and these improvements were felt to be beneficial for the church as well.
- d. The working group recommended pursuing larger, more profitable rental opportunities in the future, rather than a smaller day care opportunity in the fall of 2017 (Clinton Path).

XI. Outside Review of Finance Policies and Procedures

- a. \$5000 was budgeted for this review. July-August 2017 may be a good time for this work.
- b. Define roles of Treasurer, Administrator, and Minister
- c. Define and document standard financial procedures (record keeping, check signing)
- d. Expand our efforts to secure bequests and estate planning as part of stewardship

XII. FY18 Budget

- a. The Finance Committee discussed the concept of Sustainability. This term was felt to encompass *not only* financial sustainability (neutral endowment draw, approximately 4.5% per year) but also sustainability for the building at Walnut St, and sustainability for staff (clear and realistic job expectations with experience and performance review integrated into salary decisions).
- b. On 1/17/17 the FC heard the report from the Transition Team on the Congregational Survey result. A key finding of this survey was the importance to the congregation of reducing our draw on endowment to a sustainable level. The Finance Committee supports achieving this goal in 2-3 years.
- c. A budget was drafted and reviewed with the Finance Council on 12/19/16, at which time each program and committee of the church was invited to articulate its priorities and the cost to achieve them.
- d. Congregational Budget hearings were held on 4/9/17 and 4/30/17. An interactive tool was developed by Laura Hatfield to illustrate how changes in staffing models, contributions to the building reserve fund, and programmatic support would change the expected endowment draw.
- e. A nearly final draft budget was reviewed again with the Finance Council on 4/18/17 to assess any impact on programs related to eliminated staff positions, and any further reduction in programmatic budgets.
- f. The Board gave preliminary approval to the draft budget on 4/3/17 and final approval on 5/1/17.
- g. The following are notable changes for FY18 compared with FY17:
 - i. The elimination of Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator positions
 - ii. Replacing a 0.75 FTE Director of RE with a 1.0 FTE Coordinator of RE
 - iii. The board acknowledged that with two fewer staff positions, the remaining staff would not be able to perform the same amount of work. To compensate for this without adding a position to payroll, \$19,000 was allocated to a new Administrative Transition Fund, to be used by the minister with the input of staff, to supplement the execution of key administrative functions in this year of transition. This will be a year of learning how best to use our paid staff, how to integrate volunteers where appropriate, and how to eliminate administrative functions that are not critical to the church mission.
 - iv. \$15,000 for the ministerial search
 - v. \$5,000 for a review of Financial Policies and Procedures

- vi. No change in the money allocated to the Building reserve fund (\$40,000/yr)
- vii. **The endowment draw from the FY18 budget dropped from 10.9% (FY17 budget) to 7.8%. The estimated actual endowment draw from FY17 was 9.7%.**

XIII. Endowment

- a. Despite withdrawals operating and payroll expenses, the endowment grew between 7/1/16 and 3/31/17 from \$2,148,443 to \$2,220,386 due to silver sale proceeds and realized investment gain.

XIV. UUA Common Endowment Fund Performance

- a. As of Jan 31, 2017, the annual yield of the UUA CEF was 6.4%. This compares with a comparable yield for domestic equity composites of 12.2% and for international equity composites of 6.6%.
- b. The Finance Committee endorses a re-examination of our investment in the UUA CEF in FY 2018.
- c. The Treasurer participates in the quarterly UUA CEF report.

XV. Mission-driven accounting

- a. A goal of relating our payroll and programmatic expenditures to our mission statement was endorsed and is a key goal for FY 2018.

FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE
Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2018

	Approved FY 2017	Estimated FY 2017 Actuals	Proposed FY 2018
INCOME			
Pledges	420,000	410,000	428,571
Building rentals	16,000	16,500	16,000
Fees and Other			
Sunday Offering	7,000	12,000	10,000
Activity Fees	3,000	1,500	3,000
Other Donations	5,000	5,000	5,000
Grants and Designated Income	5,000	5,000	5,000
Interest	50	50	50
Subtotal	<u>20,050</u>	<u>23,550</u>	<u>23,050</u>
Fundraising Events	5,500	53	-
Subtotal	<u>461,550</u>	<u>450,103</u>	<u>467,621</u>
Endowment			
Withdrawal based on \$2M Balance	10.9%	9.70%	7.8%
Endowment Transfer	218,000	194,000	155,500
TOTAL INCOME	<u>679,550</u>	<u>644,103</u>	<u>623,121</u>
EXPENSES			
Payroll - Salaries			
Interim Senior Minister - FTE	91,575	91,575	94,575
Assistant Minister - 3/4 time for 5 weeks	4,958	4,958	-
*Ministerial Other (Contribution to Minister's Social Sec)	14,468	14,468	14,318
Director of Religious Ed - 3/4 FTE thru 12/31/16	44,475	23,000	-
Coordinator of Religious Ed - Full time	-	-	44,450
Music Director - 1/2 time	30,250	30,250	30,250
Section Leaders	16,000	16,000	16,000
Parish Administrator - FTE	52,150	52,150	52,150
Administrative Assistant - 3/4 time	34,580	33,800	-
Membership Coordinator - 1/2 time	20,713	20,713	-
Sexton/Custodian - FTE	27,924	27,924	33,150
Nursery	3,600	3,600	3,000
Benefits - Prof Expenses, Health, Taxes, Pension	84,060	84,060	82,102
Total Payroll Expense	<u>424,753</u>	<u>402,498</u>	<u>369,995</u>
<i>*Ministerial other - Ministers are treated as Contractual Employees and therefore pay their own social security. FPB contributes the recommended amount which is a % of the minister's total</i>			
Program-related			
Denominational	18,000	18,000	19,000
Sunday Services - Music	6,500	6,500	6,500
Religious Exploration	10,200	2,500	6,500
Special / Committee Funding	43,850	36,350	27,900
Welcome Team	1,000	1,000	500
Subtotal	<u>79,550</u>	<u>64,350</u>	<u>60,400</u>
Functional			
Administration & Office	36,000	40,500	59,500
Building Operations	99,000	96,600	93,000
	<u>135,000</u>	<u>137,100</u>	<u>152,500</u>
B&G Investment Reserve	40,000	40,000	40,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>679,303</u>	<u>643,948</u>	<u>622,895</u>
NET	247	155	226

FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE
Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2018

EXPENSE DETAIL

	Approved FY 2017	Estimated FY 2017 Actuals	Proposed FY 2018
Administration & Office			
Administrative Transition	-	-	19,000
Office Supplies	4,250	4,250	4,250
Telephone	5,000	5,000	5,000
Postage	750	750	750
Printing & Copying	2,000	2,000	2,000
Equipment Lease	5,000	5,000	5,000
Computer/Software/ New Tech	4,000	9,000	4,500
Hospitality	5,500	4,500	4,000
Temporary Help	2,000	2,000	2,000
Website	800	800	800
Flowers	500	500	500
Miscellaneous	250	250	250
Bank Services Fees	500	500	500
Credit Card Fees	500	1,000	1,000
Payroll Processing Expenses	3,600	3,600	3,600
D&O Insur / Fin Review (\$5K)	1,350	1,350	6,350
Ministers Discretionary Exp	-	-	-
Subtotal	36,000	40,500	59,500
Building Operations			
Commercial Insurance	30,000	30,000	30,000
Fuel - Oil	30,000	22,000	25,000
Utilities	7,600	7,600	7,600
Municipal Fees	1,900	1,900	1,900
Snow Removal	5,000	5,600	5,000
Repairs & Small Projects	12,000	18,000	12,000
Cleaning Supplies	3,000	3,000	3,000
General Maintenance	7,500	7,500	7,500
Cell Phone	1,000	-	-
Parish Furnishings	1,000	1,000	1,000
Subtotal	99,000	96,600	93,000
Specific Committee Funding			
Care Ministry	3,000	3,000	1,000
Diversity	800	800	800
Historic Archives	50	50	100
Parish Committee	4,000	4,000	4,000
Search Committee	-	-	15,000
300 Celebration	4,500	4,500	-
Emerging Ministries	7,500	-	-
Ministerial Transition	8,000	8,000	-
Multicultural/Anti-Racism	10,000	10,000	-
Social Action	1,750	1,750	4,000
Stained Glass	250	250	-
Worship	4,000	4,000	3,000
Subtotal	43,850	36,350	27,900

**UUA Compensation Guideline (2 pages) for GEO Index 6
were inserted at this point**

WELCOMING COMMITTEE 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Team Members: Elena Garofoli (Chair), Scott Ullrich, Charles Sandmel, Laura Hatfield, Branch Moody, Nick Peterson-Davis, Bijan Etemad-Gilbertson, Ann Dinsmoor, and Kristen McIntire (staff)

Our Mission: We seek to attract, invite, inspire, retain, and support newcomers; to encourage membership and foster a congregation-wide spirit of radical hospitality in support of a healthy and growing church community; and to facilitate participative and joyful connections between newcomers and members.

Our 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.

2016-2017 Achievements

- Welcomed 31 new members into the congregation
- Organized circle suppers on October 1 and church-wide potluck on February 11
- Hosted UU 101 class for six potential new members October 23, and again on January 29 for nine potential new members
- Provided delicious homemade hospitality after church on the second Sunday of the month at coffee hour
- Ordered and distributed special Seeker issue of UU World magazine

Congregational Action Items

Sign up to greet! It's fun, easy, and a great way to get to know the whole congregation. If you are interested in volunteering, sign up at <http://signup.com/go/MeAkrs> On your Sunday morning, please arrive at 10:30am and a member of the Welcoming Team will teach you everything you need to know!

Join our team! We are seeking new team members to join our warm, collegial, and efficient team. Team members attend monthly meetings, greet once/twice a month, recruit new greeters, plan Circle Suppers and other special events. If you are interested in joining us, please email membershipchair@firstparishinbrookline.org.

Appreciation and Recognition

We are tremendously grateful to Kristen McIntire, our Membership Coordinator, for coordinating greeting schedules, collecting and updating newcomer information, sending newcomer notes, and supporting all of us on Sunday mornings.

Special thanks also to all those who joined us in welcoming on Sunday mornings, including Ann Dinsmoor, Jody Leader, Jeff Cadow, Sheila Hussey, Paul McLean, Tai Melendy, Anne Modena, Nancy Marks, Joey Ullrich, Laura Walters, and Meredith Williamson.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

May 2016-May 2017

Co-chairs: Susan Larrabee and Martin Thomson

Members: Jessica Aguilera-Steinert, Nancy Clark, Anna Eisengart, Gerry Leader, Jody Leader, Sally Moore and Lisa Underhill

Purpose / Mission Statement: We are the lay leaders for First Parish worship services, collaborating with ministers and staff to create a safe and spiritual place for faith expression through the year.

Accomplishments Past Year (2016/2017)

- Provided a lay face to the congregation at every Sunday Worship service throughout the year
- Supported ministers in leading Sunday worship including leading unison chalice lighting and candles of peace, and providing readings, testimonials, and prayers as needed
- Welcomed visiting ministers to the First Parish pulpit; providing them guidance and support prior to and during the service and greeted parishioners with them at the completion of the service
- Participated in twice-monthly staff meetings to plan Sunday Worship (attended by 4-5 rotating WC members)
- Held monthly committee meetings with the Minister to discuss recent and upcoming worship activities
- Provided feedback on Sunday worship (from the committee and relayed ad hoc feedback from the congregation)
- Hosted 3-hour Committee retreat in September 2016
- Worked with the Minister to choose worship themes for next year
- Facilitated all summer worship services last summer (recruited worship and music leaders, provided worship assistants, provided snacks, collected the offering, etc.)
- Designed and held a workshop to train summer worship lay leaders using the guidelines and the order of service template designed last year
- Updated the Worship Committee Charter and revised our Covenant
- Endeavored to provide each member of the committee spiritual support throughout the year and to instill a sense of spirituality in our every interaction.

Tasks Next Year (2017/2018)

- Facilitate summer 2017 worship
- Schedule two committee retreats
- With Rev. Rebecca Bryan, continue support and to assist with Sunday worship
- Continue to provide and relay feedback regarding Sunday worship
- Provide support for other worship activities outside of regular Sunday worship as needed.
- Recruit 1-2 youth members

We thank Reverend Rebecca Bryan and Sonya Abbott for essential support and guidance throughout the year.