



# First Parish in Brookline

A WELCOMING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

May 6, 2014

Dear Member of First Parish in Brookline,

Join us on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 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 Opening Hymn  
Approve Minutes of 2013 Annual Meeting  
Recognize and elect New Members  
Elect Officers and Committee Members  
Vote on FY 2014-15 Budget  
Vote on By-Law Changes  
Any Other Business  
Closing Hymn  
Adjourn

Hoping to see you at 1:00 pm in Lyon Chapel on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>!

Steve Davis,  
Parish Committee Chair

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

### **New Parish Members**

The following 10 people have signed the membership book since our last Annual Meeting:

Luis Aguilera	Kimberly Gladman Jackson
Jessica Aguilera-Steinert	Meredith Hall
Kathleen Burck	A. Mitra Morgan
David Cave	James Shillaber
Peggy Cave	Kim Whelan

### **Officers and Standing Committee Members**

The Leadership Development Committee nominates the following members:

For Clerk of the Parish	Ann Gilmore
For Treasurer	Stacey Raczek
For Moderator	Janet Sanders
For the Parish Committee	Sue Andrews Elena Garofoli Corey Thomas
For Leadership Development Committee	Margie Beal
For the Religious Education Committee	Jeff Cadow Richard Day Elizabeth McIntire

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jake Walters  
Clerk of the Parish*

**FIRST PARISH IN BROOKLINE**  
**Minutes of the 296<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Call to Order by Moderator**

**Chalice Lighting and Opening Hymn**

**Approve Minutes of 2012 Annual Meeting**

The minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting are approved unanimously.

**Recognize and Elect New Members**

Change to the published agenda: 47 new members rather than 46.

The 47 new members are elected unanimously.

**Elect Officers and Committee Members**

Change to the published agenda: Ann Gilmore added to members for Parish Committee, Don Kilburn removed from members of the Leadership Development Committee.

Officers and committee members are elected.

**Affirm congregation-wide social action issues**

**Progress Reports**

**Vote on FY 2013-14 Budget**

Ryan Kim (Treasurer) gives an overview of the past year's finances and proposed budget for the coming year. He provided explanations for certain figures in the budget in response to questions: Income from fund raising events projected at \$25,000 in FY2014 (income from the Fall Auction was \$28,000 before the recession); \$5,000 of the Grants and Designated Income figures for FY2012 and FY2013 came from a Family Foundation; the majority of the deficit in the FY2013 Estimated Actual figures is due to the lack of an auction during the year.

The budget is approved unanimously.

**Resolution on becoming multi-racial, anti-racist congregation**

Ann Gilmore, member of the Diversity Caucus, reads a preamble for resolution.

The resolution is approved with the change of "multi-racial" to "anti-racist".

**Start of a capital campaign and congregational conversation on values related to our assets**

Sophia Johansson reads the goals of the feasibility effort. Karla Baehr reads a list of questions to be discussed, including use of the sanctuary, the role of music, the priority of Religious Exploration, our approach to the tower structure, and restoration of stained glass windows. During an open question & answer period, a member asks whether removing pews from the sanctuary had already been decided upon. Karla's response is that we will discuss and decide on the issue as a community.

**Presentation on search for second minister and hiring of interim minister**

Steve Davis, vice-chair of the Parish Committee, outlines the process for finding a second minister. To assemble a search committee, which will consist of at least 7 members, the Parish Committee is asking people to nominate themselves for the committee rather than select

people based on demographics. A congregational member asks whether Rev. Jim was called as a full-time minister; the reply is yes, at  $\frac{3}{4}$  time.

### **Vote to use endowment proceeds to pay for repair of stained glass**

Chip DeWitt, chair of the Parish Committee, explains that the current effort to assess the condition of the stained glass windows and plan for their restoration and sustainability began in 2009 with the formation of a sub-committee of the Parish Committee. This led to the creation of the Stained Glass Committee, which hired Serpentino Stained Glass in Needham, MA. They have completed restoration of the Lowell window's lancets. The balance for the work is \$90,000; \$80,000 has been raised to date.

A vote on this issue is postponed until the fall of 2013.

### **Authorize Parish Committee to sell historical silver with proceeds to go into the endowment**

Chip explains that the silver, if auctioned, could raise approximately \$370,000, according to an appraiser. A member asks whether the money raised from the auction would go directly to restoring the stained glass windows, and if there had been a vote to make that decision. The reply is that no such decision or vote had been made – the funds would go into the endowment. To sell the silver, two votes would be required: one to approve the sale, and a second to withdraw money from the endowment to pay Serpentino for the balance of the Lowell lancet restoration.

Additional questions raised: What is the value of the Lowell window should we attempt to sell it (A: unknown); if we rearrange the sanctuary, e.g., remove the pews, might we want different windows; when is the \$90,000 balance to Serpentino due (A: they have been flexible).

A motion to change the wording to “Authorize Parish Committee to investigate and sell historical silver with proceeds to go into the endowment” is approved, a subsequent motion to strike “and sell” is not. Rev. Jim explains that we have the best estimate we could obtain.

The agreed-to modified wording is approved with 1 opposition and 4 abstentions.

### **Perspective of the Parish Committee on the year**

Chip highlights the beginning of the search for a second minister, the work of the Congregational Engagement Committee, the farewell to Rev. Martha Niebanck, and recognition of the co-ministry's success and its coming to an end. He reflected on Paul McLean's reading of what the First Parish community valued when we started the search process that eventually called Revs. Martha and Jim, and that what we hoped for then is actually happening.

### **Other Business**

There is none.

### **Closing Hymn and Adjourn**

**Respectfully submitted,**  
*Jeff Cadow*  
**Member**

## **SENIOR MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014**

Dear Ones,

Broader society trends do not define us but they do provide a context for our ministry together. The generational changes in our community, as more baby boomers prepare for retirement and more folks of the millennial generation seek us out, is gradually, and sometimes not so gradually, changing what we do here and how we do it. We are increasingly seeking beloved community instead of civic engagement. Our sense of engagement in relationships, including committee meetings and Sunday morning worship, increasingly are more affective and sometimes less effective. Traditional families, however they are defined, are a shrinking minority of our families, with growing diversity of family structures and changing expectations of our faith community. Rebecca Keller Scholl and I attended a UU regional RE workshop which strongly suggests that growing changes in multigenerational faith formation are just beginning to impact our religious exploration programs. The need for growing cultural competence has never been greater and has never been as rewarding as it is today. Our work for social justice is increasingly moving from providing for those in greater need to becoming allies with the marginalized and oppressed. This is an exciting time to be the leader of a faith community deeply engaging this globalizing environment.

As part of our transition to being a mid-size II congregation (250 to 350 members), the Parish Committee adopted five goals for our ministry this past fiscal year: 1) deepening beloved community; 2) strengthening youth programs; 3) evaluating and strengthening our religious exploration programs; 4) building cultural competence; and 5) helping lead a changing approach to our social justice work. I am pleased to report good progress in each of these areas. We have more people involved in more different kinds of programs here and continue to look for new and better ways to connect. Our youth, and their lay adult advisers, have identified benefits of hiring a paid quarter time youth adviser, which we are committed to doing once pledging levels reach a level that we can safely do so. Our Religious Exploration Committee seems to be coming to a greater consensus on how to best execute and evaluate their work, even while we begin to better understand the impact of changing communication technology on our various programs. We have embraced a series of workshops this year on many aspects of gender identity, class, and culture as they intersect and play out within our community. This is important work we need to continue. The conversation about who sets our social action agenda, with whom and on whose behalf, and to what purpose, is a rich and deep conversation that is just beginning, even as we increasingly act in the world with and on behalf of those most in need.

Last October we invited UUA financial consultant Mark Ewert to evaluate our congregation's place on our journey. He applauded our doubling of membership and 168% growth in annual pledges over the last nine years. He pointed out however that our financial health was too dependent on a small number of large givers with too large a portion of our congregation pledging less than \$1000 per year. He celebrated our bringing our endowment draw percentage below 5% annually and to less than 25% of our overall budget, and encouraged us to use our other fundraising to fund scholarships and stipends, even if that meant we need to move annual pledges substantially higher to remain financially sustainable. He encouraged us to broaden our financial transparency, and include more folks in the conversation, something we will continue to do in the coming year. He saw our policies were largely undocumented and

our bylaws largely out of date. We had Sean Neil-Barron as a HDS field education student here this year, working with the Parish Committee, to review and update all our policies, and begin drafting bylaw changes for this mid-size II congregation. The deepening engagement of this community, along with its growing size and diversity of expectations, has made the work of the Second Minister Search Committee critical to our future. I look forward to leading a more diverse ministry team that can better meet the needs and expectations of more of this diverse community. I am enormously proud of the progress being made in this independent faith community. It isn't always easy or pain free. We continue to experiment and sometimes make mistakes. But we are increasingly a financially sustainable faith community, consistently living our values, in community, within growing complexity, and able to offer something precious to a world in need. I am deeply grateful to lead this community in this time of extraordinary change.

*I love you all dearly,  
Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblom*

## **REPORT OF THE PARISH COMMITTEE**

Congregational Year 2013-2014

We, the members of the Parish Committee would like to begin this report with an expression of gratitude. We volunteer to serve First Parish in Brookline out of our deep love and appreciation for this community; its ministerial team and staff, and every one of its members and friends. We recognize that we are stronger and better together and through our commitment to be in community we experience life more fully. We thank you for honoring us with the opportunity to serve and we continue our commitment to serve with integrity, compassion and transparency.

It has been our privilege to witness and participate in the glory that is First Parish in Brookline. As a community this year, we have tended to each other in love. We have found new ways to worship together through our Sunday evening contemplative services and growing opportunities for spiritual development and small group ministry. We listened and supported each other, encouraged each other to be our best selves and loved each other just as we are. We were there for each other through life's challenges and have grown together through our embrace of diversity. We look forward to the richness of the gifts of our growing diversity that we have yet to experience. We supported our beloved Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblom in his first year as our senior minister and we thank him for his continued commitment to grow into his new role with us. We ordained our beloved Robin Bartlett after she served as our student minister. And, we wish Sarah Napoline well as we say thank you for 2 great years of her student ministry. We are blessed to have each other and our growing ministry here at First Parish.

As a community this year, we have tended to our business. We have extended and expanded our relationship with our beloved interim minister, Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa, for another year. We came together and voted (twice) to pay for the restoration of the side lancets of our precious stained glass windows, we celebrated while we raised money for First Parish in Brookline at our holiday party and we collectively pledged over \$400,000 to support the growing budget of this church. We listened and we studied and we carefully developed our proposed updates to our bylaws and new and improved policies to be in better alignment with our values and our current practices.

We thank you – each of you – for what you bring to our glorious community.

The Parish Committee began this year with recognition of a growing need for transparency and trust from our lay leaders, ministerial team and our processes. In support of this need, we developed and communicated goals for the Parish Committee and the ministerial team so that you knew what we were working on and so that our results could be measured. We posted our minutes on the First Parish in Brookline website (see Clerk's page) and we provided occasional updates from the pulpit. We communicate our progress towards the Parish Committee goals herein. Please see the Ministerial Team's Annual Report for their progress towards their goals.

**PC Goal I: GOVERNANCE** - *Clarify governance and roles of Ministerial Team and Parish Committee.*

1. **Reconcile our current practices and policies:** Under the auspices of the Parish Committee, our field education student, Sean Neal-Barron, led a year-long process that engaged members of the ministerial team, staff, committees and the congregation in an effort to bring our bylaws and policies in keeping with our values, best practices, and current needs. Sean reviewed years of Annual reports, budgets, Parish Committee minutes and other

records. We solicited volunteers to support this process along the way from the pulpit and through newsletters and email. Additionally, we invited all members to participate in a dialogue regarding both the bylaws and the policy manual and more than 25 of you engaged in this way and offered critical feedback and input. Today (May 18, 2014) we present the first phase of proposed edits to the bylaws for your consideration and vote. The second phase of this effort will focus on a handful of more formative issues and will continue into next year. For this we plan to engage a broader congregational dialogue through a series of meetings. The updated policy manual is in the church office. We encourage everyone to become familiar with these bylaws and policies, as our shared understanding of their contents is critical to our thriving within their guidelines and protocols. Thank you to Sean Neal-Barron for his tireless and careful efforts on these foundational documents. His ministry in this area is gratefully received.

2. **Clarify the respective roles of Ministerial Team and Parish Committee:** The centerpiece of this effort was the process of updating the bylaws and policies to help clarify the roles of the Parish Committee and ministerial team as well as to ensure congregational polity and clarify policies. In addition, the Parish Committee stepped forward on a number of key governance issues such as hiring, financial stewardship, etc. Of note, the Parish Committee stepped up its role with regards to financial stewardship. We took a more active role in the annual canvass through testimonials and active canvassing; thereby allowing Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblom to remain more focused on his ministry. We took our lead from the Canvass Co Chairs, Alice Mark and Sue Andrews, and we thank them and all the Canvass volunteers for their commitment and the delivery of our highest yielding pledge drive in the History of First Parish in Brookline. Under the leadership of our Treasurer, Ryan Kim, we engaged in a more iterative budget process this year with over 7 iterations prior to the one we present today for your approval. Our job was made easier by the success of the Canvass campaign and your combined pledging commitments. However, we still made some difficult choices to live into our intentions of financial sustainability and we are delighted that today's proposed budget plans for a more sustainable draw of 5.5% from our endowment. Other important activities to clarify respective roles included the dialogue associated with our monthly status reports from Rev. Dr. Jim regarding performance against goals, performance against budget, staffing issues and ministerial issues. This process has proved to be an effective way for the Parish Committee to set clear direction for the ministerial team and to measure accountability towards these important goals. We plan to continue this process into next year.

**PC Goal 2: CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT** - *Deepen awareness and engagement of the congregation in the internal affairs of the church, especially regarding: clarifying our values, vision and mission, achieving financial sustainability, assessing feasibility of a capital campaign, and selecting a second minister.*

We began the year with rich and focused dialogue on our values, mission and vision. After engaging in this process among Parish Committee members, we recognized that this dialogue requires engagement from the entire congregation. We are committed to making that happen in the upcoming church year.

1. **Charter and Enlist a Second Minister Search Committee (SMSC):** After publishing the charter for the SMSC and in an effort to identify all interested parties in the second minister search process we conducted an experiment. We solicited self-nominations for this important committee. Our hope for this experiment is that we would identify all interested parties – those known to us and those unknown to us. Additionally, we hoped that self-selection would bring forward motivated and engaged committee participants. All evidence would suggest that the experiment was a success. We received 10 thoughtful self-



nominations and selected all 10 to be on the committee. The SMSC worked tirelessly against an aggressive timeline and set of deliverables. They engaged the congregation through multiple dialogues and feedback methods, produced a glorious congregational record and conducted a hugely successful search process. In the end, the right match for our needs was not out there at this time. Still, the work of this group will be utilized to greatly reduce the burden of next year's continuation of the second minister search. We all owe every member of the SMSC our deepest gratitude for their faithful efforts on our behalf. The Parish Committee has voted to accept the SMSC's recommendation of extending and expanding the interim ministry of Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa for a second year. The Parish Committee will consider the charter of another SMSC for this upcoming church year at our June retreat. We hope that at least some members of this year's committee will be available for a second year of search as we would like to ensure we continue in the direction they have already set forth.

2. **Communicate regularly: Newsletter, Weekly Update, from the pulpit:** We began the year with a discipline of updating the congregation from the pulpit during the Sunday service that followed each Parish Committee meeting with pertinent details of the issues we were working through as a committee. We also took turns contributing to the monthly newsletter so that folks who weren't in the service could track the issues of our focus and progress towards our goals. We took a temporary break from this schedule to share our testimonials during Canvass season. We must now get back to this practice as it helps keep us connected with you and you with us.
3. **Sponsor Congregational Meetings:** We sponsored five congregational meetings throughout this church year. Two meetings were held, in keeping with our bylaws, for the purpose of seeking congregational approval to withdraw funds from the endowment to pay for restoration work done on the side lancets of the Lowell Memorial stained glass window. Two meetings were held to solicit input and support towards our proposed edits to the bylaws and policy manual. One meeting was held for a detailed review of the proposed budget that will be presented at the Annual Meeting for a congregational vote.

**PC Goal 3 - CONGREGATIONAL VALUES** - *Support and foster collaboration among committees with focus this year on the work of the Diversity Caucus and the Religious Exploration and Social Action Committees.*

The Religious Exploration Committee and the Diversity Caucus have begun early conversations that we hope will lead to opportunities that support both committees' ministries. The Parish Committee is beginning a more formal evaluation for the organization, coordination and structure among a broader spectrum of First Parish Committees this June at our annual retreat. We aspire to engage more deeply in dialogue with a broader cross section of committees in this upcoming year.

#### **Other Business:**

The restored side lancets of the Lowell Memorial stained glass window are scheduled to be installed on June 20<sup>th</sup>. We will enjoy their beauty for generations to come. We still have a number of stained glass windows in need of repair including the center panel of the Lowell Memorial window. These concerns will be addressed going forward as we consider a capital campaign or some other way to address the risk of further damage that exists. The Parish Committee would like to thank Sheila Hussey and all members of the Stained Glass Window Committee for their commitment to the preservation of the stained glass. Although the committee is no longer active, the result of their good work will be celebrated as part of our Homecoming Service in September.

The Parish Committee would like to thank Senofer Mendoza, Melinda Maryniuk and all of the Holiday Party volunteers for their success in hosting a wonderful holiday celebration that raised over \$13,000 for First Parish in Brookline.

This has been a year of growth here at First Parish in Brookline. We wish everyone a warm and energizing summer and hope to see you at our summer services.

*In faith and on behalf of the Parish Committee,  
Steven Davis*

*Parish Committee Members:*

*Greg Buckland, Ann Congleton, Steve Davis (Chair), Ann Dinsmoor, Ann Gilmore, Ryan Kim (Treasurer), Stacey Raczek, Anya Thomas (Vice Chair), Jake Walters (Clerk),*

## **BUILDING STEWARDSHIP and CAPACITY DISCERNMENT TEAM**

(Capital Campaign)

The Building Stewardship and Capacity Discernment Team evolved from what was originally envisioned as a “capital campaign committee” that would lead a process to discern the feasibility of First Parish launching a capital campaign to coincide with our 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. In our initial work with UUA stewardship consultant Mark Ewert, it became clear that First Parish would have to complete significant work before our congregation would be ready for a capital campaign. Therefore, we renamed ourselves the “Building Stewardship and Capacity Discernment Team” to reflect our new role, and devoted this year to supporting the congregation and Parish Committee in laying the foundation upon which we, as a congregation, can better realize our financial and spiritual goals.

We hosted the Next Steps Weekend this past October. This event brought together different committees and congregants over the course of two days to better acquaint Mark Ewert with First Parish. His goal was to discern our congregational capacity for sound stewardship, including what might be required to determine the feasibility of a capital campaign. Upon the conclusion of the weekend, he presented the congregation with some basic observations and recommendations and discussed these more in-depth with the Parish Committee. Mark followed up with a written report that has continued to guide our efforts throughout this year.

These were his key findings:

- First Parish is a growing congregation with strong leaders and inspiring worship and music.
- Growing pains are presenting themselves in many different aspects of congregational life, including physical space.
- There is a need to update and revise the congregation’s bylaws.
- We have a vibrant and ambitious faith development program, Welcoming Team, and Pastoral Care Associates effort.
- We have good administration and well-managed financial systems.
- We need to develop a new mission, vision, and plan with trackable goals.
- We have beautiful building and grounds (with artistically important windows) in need of repair and reconfiguration to meet current and future needs.
- There has been steady growth in financial contributions and a number of years of successful annual budget drives.
- There is an over-reliance on the endowment to fund the annual budget.
- Our annual pledge (canvass) reflects too few large amount givers and too many modest amount givers to the annual budget.
- We need to take a number of key steps before we can launch a capital campaign.

Based on these findings, Mark made two major recommendations. The first was for us to transform our understanding and practice of stewardship. Our Parish Committee heard this charge and we have experienced a significant growth in this aspect of their leadership. We also credit this year’s canvass with revitalizing our congregation’s vision and understanding of stewardship as we know it.

The second recommendation was for the Parish Committee to lead a congregation-wide effort to make explicit what he called our “shared endeavor” by defining our mission, articulating a collective vision for our future, and creating a plan to achieve it. The Parish Committee has laid the foundation for this vision-setting work by beginning to revise our by-laws, re-envisioning what stewardship means, and taking a leadership role in the annual canvass.

The purpose of the Building Stewardship and Capacity Discernment Team was to serve as a catalyst for building our congregation’s stewardship capacity. We originally committed to working on this for the 2013-2014 church year. Although much of our work was indirect and much of it, “behind the scenes,” we believe we have provided our congregation and the Parish Committee with the right information and resources to continue with this work. We have witnessed some key steps in the process and look forward to supporting the visioning work that our consultant recommended for next year.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve First Parish in this way and are hopeful that the Parish Committee and others feel empowered to continue this work going forward.

*Faithfully submitted,  
Karla Baehr and Sophia Johansson*

## **SECOND MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE**

The **Second Minister Search Committee (SMSC)** is comprised of Sue Andrews, Janet Britcher *Chair*, Lori Day, Almas Dossa, Bllu Catalano, Gerry Leader, Mark Reynolds, Dorothy Richardson, Landon Rose, Ron Wilkinson, *Parish Committee Liaisons*: Anya Thomas and Ann Gilmore

We held meetings in the fall and conducted a survey among the congregation to identify the skills needed. We met and interviewed current staff, and prior search committee members. We published and announced at worship a 500 word summary of what we are seeking, as well as an extensive Congregational Record, submitted to the UUA search process for candidates. We received and reviewed 17 Ministerial Records (applications), conducted phone interviews with 7 candidates, chose 3 finalists based on the phone interviews, reference checks, sample sermons, and other background information provided. We met more than twice a month.

For the three finalists, weekends were comprised of a 3-hour interview on a Saturday, a tour of First Parish in Brookline, and the surrounding areas, and followed on Sunday by the SMSC observing the candidate preaching at a neutral pulpit, and wrapped up with a luncheon for the candidate with the SMSC.

One of the three finalists moved out of state, one we felt was not a fit, and one declined our offer. We subsequently recommended an increase in salary for the role from \$34,000 to \$38,000 which the Parish Committee approved, and entered the second round of search with the UUA but did not find a suitable match. Our expectations are high! We are delighted to report that Maria Cristina has accepted our offer to extend her interim ministry with us one more year, increasing from half time to three-quarters time.

## **FIELD EDUCATION INTERN REPORT**

In October the Parish Committee was presented with an Initial Governance Review, which proposed two areas of engagement for my work this semester. The first was to facilitate a bylaw revision process and the second was to construct a policy manual. Both tasks were to be completed through congregational engagement. Over the following seven and a half months significant headway has been achieved on these two fronts.

On the bylaw front, after a congregational consultation process, that included review and oversight from the Parish Committee, the members of First Parish in Brookline will be presented with important bylaw amendments at their 2014 Annual Meeting. There are still significant questions for future discussion, regarding the congregation's bylaws but the present changes represent an important step into the present.

On the policy front, the congregations policies have been collected, a template created for their review, five significant policies (Religious Exploration, Facilities Usage, Disruptive Behavior, Key Access, and Alcohol) have been reviewed and one outdated policy has been removed, the Investment policy. As of May 5th these policies need to be passed, and all past related policies need to be universally rescinded, by the Parish Committee for this work to be official.

A Policy Manual has been drafted that includes updated versions of the bylaws, policies, congregational procedures, and other related important documents. One of the most important accomplishments has been the deepening of the conversation and the raising of consciousness at First Parish about congregational governance. This has led to increased transparency, beginning to clarify congregational roles and responsibilities. All of these documents and files will be delivered to the Church Administrator.

These accomplishments have unearthed further governance work for the congregation-- spearheaded by the Parish Committee-- to be completed in the years to come. The proceeding section identifies these outstanding areas.

### **Future Work**

#### ***Bylaws***

During the bylaw review process the Parish Committee raised up three areas of the bylaws need further engagement and congregational consultation.

1. The age and responsibilities of congregational membership
2. The process for ministerial call and the office of the minister

During congregational consultation the following areas were raised are requiring further clarification:

- The ambiguity of the requirements for membership, specifically what a member is subscribing to when the document says "subscribing to our statement of purpose"
- The reciprocal nomination relationship between the Leadership Development Committee and the Parish Committee
- The ability to use absentee ballots at congregational meetings

The Parish Committee reviewed but decided not to consider certain bylaw amendments this should be reviewed during any future bylaw conversation.

## **Policies**

Despite making significant headway on the Parish's policy, there exists important policy work to complete in the years to come.

- The Social Action Policy is the last major policy that has not been reviewed.
- A sexual harassment policy needs to be developed
- A covenant of right relationships (a behavioral/shared values covenant) would aid the congregation in understanding how they relate to one another

## **Charters**

At this present moment the use of committee charters is in need of a massive overhaul. Most committees exist without a charter, and those that have one seem to operate independent of it. The larger conversation of the churches governance system and relationship within internally relating bodies is a pressing one and deserves increasing attention. This is additionally pressing considering the coinciding impacts of growth and 21st century church that make unused church bureaucracy a liability. It is my advice that the Parish Committee seek outside advice, from the UUA or local district leaders, to engage with this issue. A pressing need before this is to engage with and decide upon the charter of the Religious Exploration Committee that when they are taken out of the bylaws will have no foundational or operational documents

## **Procedures**

The Parish Committee, and other members of the church, need to begin to think systematically when thinking about the procedures that rely currently on institutional and relational memory. What are all the steps and practices of a Parish Committee meeting? Where do minutes go after they are approved? Who records votes at special meetings? In developing a secondary thought process when engaging in the everyday activities that asks the question: Where is this recorded? The Parish Committee can lower the relational institutional knowledge into an externalized form.

## **Systemic**

From my vantage point, the Parish Committee is placing itself on the road to increased openness and accountability. This is an important and faithful path, when it is embarked on with the full understanding that democracy consists of not only leading when empowered, listening always, protecting the rights of minority opinions but not letting the loudest voices trump the silent agreeing majority. Greater openness will necessitate a greater ability to hear criticism and discerning if it represents a true will of the community you have been tasked to shepherd.

The systematizing of policies and procedures in the policy manual is beginning of Brookline's dynamic documentary evidence of its governance. The degree to which the Parish Committee engages with the policy manual, and begins to document its procedures the stronger a platform for governance and leadership the committee and the church will have.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Sean Neil-Barron*

## **INTERIM SECOND MINISTER**

Dear Ones,

The first time I visited this congregation in August of last year, I introduced myself by honoring my family: “I am the great-granddaughter of Dominga, the granddaughter of Florentina del Rosario, the daughter of Lily, the mother of Erick... My name is Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa” When meeting people for the first time, this traditional greeting brings my loved ones into the room in gratitude for their ongoing guidance and support. When I delivered a sermon before you as a guest preacher, I shared with you my reflections about practicing Radical Hospitality. Today, as your Interim Second Minister, I look back and am filled with deep gratitude for all the ways you continue to welcome my family and me with open hearts into your spiritual home. On September 22, Rev. Jim delivered the Greeting at my Ordination at First Parish Cambridge and several of you were there to participate in the laying on of hands ceremony and to celebrate with my friends and family. And you have continued to bless me with your generosity of spirit and ongoing support.

From the beginning, Rev. Jim and I agreed that my part-time position for the next 10 months would be focused on supporting efforts and creating new opportunities for this community to continue growing as a Multi-Cultural, Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppressive congregation. Thus, the themes of my sermons, my participation in the Diversity Caucus, and the creation of a workshop series on Multicultural Leadership have all supported that goal.

Preaching has been the main focus of my ministry, allowing for gradual relationship building and exploration of themes that nourish spiritual growth. In the process of preparing worship services, I have experienced a warm, collaborative, and supportive team atmosphere. This has resulted in the creation of excellent worship services that reflect our rich diversity and respond to the needs and aspirations of the congregation.

My participation in the Diversity Caucus has been instrumental in being immersed in the mission and vision of this community of faith. Together we have engaged in challenging and illuminating conversations about Race, Gender, Class, Immigration, Mass Incarceration, Right Relationship, Intersectionality, Cross Cultural Competence, and Multi-Cultural Leadership, to name a few. It has been an honor to work with such dedicated, visionary, creative, and kind colleagues.

To support the congregational mission and vision towards building the Beloved Community, I offered a four week interactive workshop based on the book “Salsa, Soul & Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age”. The workshop encouraged participants to incorporate many cultural perspectives, appreciate differences, value the unique contributions of diverse groups, and promote learning from many orientations.

We discussed core leadership principles common to Latino, African American and Native American communities and connected these to our own congregational experiences. The workshop offered opportunities for community building, storytelling, reflecting about leadership styles, and sharing poignant life experiences. We also enjoyed dancing salsa and merengue 😊



As President of Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) I work closely with Allies for Racial Equity (ARE). Both organizations support congregations in their efforts to build multi-cultural, anti-racist, anti-oppressive communities of faith. This April our Diversity Caucus hosted a gathering of DRUUMM and ARE members to provide a historical perspective of the UUA's Cross Cultural Council and to address the challenges of implementing a Right Relationship covenant.

While not the main focus of my ministry due to my limited hours, I have been blessed by many opportunities to provide Pastoral Care and offer spiritual support to congregants.

I have enjoyed engaging our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders in a conversation about the role of Radical Hospitality in building the Beloved Community, participating in three baby dedications, leading the Blue Christmas and Tenebrae services, composing prayers and participating in services to honor our Earth centered traditions, working with the Welcoming Committee, the Worship Committee, the Pastoral Care Team, and our amazing choir. My heartfelt *Gracias!* To the entire church staff for your patience and ongoing support; to each and every member of the congregation for your compassion and loving kindness; to my mentor Rev. Jim for his guidance and encouragement; Special thanks to the members of the Diversity Caucus: Ron Wilkinson, Almas Dossa, Ann Gilmore, Jody Leader, Martha Leader, Kristen McIntire, and Priscilla Brown; *Gracias* Rev. Eliza Blanchard for her generosity of spirit in ministering to our spiritual companions, and to Jon Hazilla for his magical drumming!

*Gracias por caminar juntos! Gracias por cuidarnos mutuamente! Gracias por el amor que permanecerá entre nosotros!*

*Blessings,*

*Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa*

*Sermons:*

*October 13, 2013: Indigenous Peoples' Day.*

*November 24, 2013: Decolonizing Thanksgiving.*

*December 8, 2013: Surprised by Joy!*

*December 29, 2013: Letting Go.*

*January 5, 2014: Three Kings Day (jointly with Rev. Jim).*

*January 26, 2014: The Politics of Disablement.*

*February 23, 2014: Got Goddess? The Feminist Divine.*

*March 16, 2014: Salsa, Soul & Spirit: Building the Beloved Multicultural Community.*

*April 27, 2014: Taking it to the Streets!*

*May 25, 2014: Gratitude.*

## **AFFILIATE MINISTER**

I serve as a community minister focusing on spiritual care for animal caregivers, particularly helping with end-of-life issues and memorials. I work with people and their animal companions privately as well as with the clients of New England Pet Hospice and Home Care.

In addition to meeting with clients and spiritual directees over the past year, I offered a workshop, "Resilient Spirits" for adults, especially caregivers, on September 24<sup>th</sup>. I organized and promoted a Blessing of the Animals on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Pierce Hall. I offered a pet loss circle on December 16<sup>th</sup>, and another on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Those who attended appreciated the chance to share their stories and have their grief truly heard. (Both the Blessing service and the pet loss circles are open to the public.)

In February, with Rebecca Keller-Scholl's invaluable wisdom and help, I offered a multi-generational worship service on the interconnected web of all that was also supported by Keith Kirchoff and the choir. In March I offered a workshop called "Becoming a Seasoned Soul." Based on my book on growing older, the two evening meetings led us into reflecting of various spiritual habits that will strengthen our resilience as we face the challenge and engage the joys of growing older. A wonderful group gathered and shared and laughed, and Rev. Jim is continuing with those who would like to further their exploration.

Finally, I've been asked by congregations all over the state to lead worship, to share what I'm learning about our connectedness with all life, often leading animal blessings; at least twice a month I've enjoyed meeting and working with other UU congregations. This has been a wonderful opportunity for me.

Going forward, I expect to continue with these forms of ministry. I'd like to lead more workshops and/or retreats on both resilience and growing older. Rev. Jim and I will talk soon about our vision of this ministry's role for the coming year, and I'm hoping to offer an animal blessing service in the fall and pet loss circles as needed.

I'm very grateful to this congregation, especially to those who've helped with the various services, to the ministers, and to the incredible staff who have been so supportive of my work. If only you could hear what a balm it is to the anxious, the confused, and the bereaved who are served in this way! I couldn't do it without you. Thank you.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Eliza Blanchard*

## ARCHIVES PROJECT

**Project Manager:** Elizabeth Cousins

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

**Accomplishments Past Year:** Completed pre-processing and re-housing all 36 oversize boxes and containers. Shelves are secured to walls. Most boxes are shelf listed into an inventory spreadsheet that indicates records creator, records series (or type/title), size and storage location. Began to post project updates to Facebook. Attended workshops on using social media and digitizing records to increase accessibility. Joined FP up for Digital Commonwealth digitizing services. Developed draft Collections Management Policy.

**Tasks Next Year:** Complete shelf listing. Meet with Minister to determine processing priorities for detailed organization and description of record series, and to investigate where the archives will live going forward. Brookline Public Library does not have room. Harvard Divinity School Library is a strong candidate. Mass Historical Society is another possibility.

Develop processing plans. Advertise for & supervise Simmons College interns to process and prepare series descriptions and metadata for online indexing. Work with Digital Commonwealth to digitize selected records (paper, audio & visuals?). Develop related policies & procedures. Contact key persons/institutions about location of other institutional records. Develop outreach plan to involve parishioners and Brookline Community in discovering FP archives.

Develop a digital records archiving plan and a records retention schedule tied to current and past missions of FP. Outreach to other UUA archivists/historians.

**See 2013 Annual Report for preliminary series list.**

**Note:** *Project records are created & maintained on my personal computer. A “turtle-shaped” thumb drive holds a backup copy, and is attached to the project notebook that always remains on site in the loft. Between the thumb drive & the notebook, the project can be taken up by my replacement, should that become necessary.*

## **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

Report to First Parish in Brookline Annual Meeting May 2014

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 – ably supported by custodians Frank Peace and Will Brown – work together with us.

### **The year in review**

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

- Continued stabilization of the tower (\$29,953). The two masonry buttresses at the northeast corner of the Sanctuary tower were repointed and reinforced with stainless steel rods. The work proceeded in consultation with structural engineer Walter MacLeod. The masonry work was performed by Consigli Construction – Clint, Sam
- Approximately 200 linear feet stone retaining wall along Walnut Street was rebuilt (\$10,000). This portion of the wall was in disrepair. The work performed constitutes about one-third of the length of the wall. Repair of the balance of the wall will be scheduled in future years as needed - Clint, Liz, Greg, Sam
- Flashing and waterproofing of the Parish House to address a persistent leak (\$7,500) – Clint
- Repairs to the wood frame and glazing of one of the leaded glass windows in Pierce Hall which was in serious disrepair (\$6,350 including sanctuary doors) - Sam
- Efforts to improve the sealing and functionality of the sanctuary entrance doors were undertaken. The antique nature of the doors and associated hinges continues to be an operational challenge - Hank, Sam
- Insulation of remaining basement heating pipes (\$1,227) - Hank
- Replacing broken heating grates in the floor of the sanctuary – Liz
- The Building and Grounds Committee 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 - Will:
  1. Improve the accessibility and safety of the sanctuary entrance
  2. Improve the outdoor areas to be part of the spiritual and social life of the Church
  3. Make "green" sustainability improvements that lessen our carbon footprint
  4. Be good stewards of the building by repairing the Tower
  5. Create more classrooms and accessible toilet rooms in the ground floor of Parish Hall
  6. Renovate Pierce Hall to better meet the multifunctional space needs of the Church
  7. Renovate the Sanctuary to improve worship experience

In fiscal year 2014, B&G's annual funding from the endowment was reduced to \$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 events.

Regarding the Tower, the crack gauges have remained stable. 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.

We renewed our membership with Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light, an advocacy group, which also provides us with advice on green projects as needed.

## **Upcoming**

We are guided by a long-term plan and continue to address our deferred maintenance, new safety issues, and accessibility and green projects. This plan allocates expenditure for specific items on a yearly basis projected out 20 years. The 2015 fiscal year B&G funding remains at the reduced level of \$40 thousand.

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.

We would like to thank retiring committee members Liz and Hank for all their many contributions to the building.

*Respectfully submitted by the Building and Grounds Committee,*

*Clint Richmond & Will Spears, Co-Chairs*

*Greg Caplan*

*Tim Dailey*

*Sam Dennis*

*Liz Martin*

*Hank Reisner*

## **BUILDING OPERATIONS**

2013 - 2014

*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 sixth year overseeing general building operations.*

Winter was a killer this year. Not only numerous snow storms that kept many of us home at least once a week from late December till the end of February, but it was also bitterly cold. Fortunately our furnaces continued to work well during this past year, with only a few minor glitches with the hot water system. Unfortunately though, we just couldn't keep up with all the melting and freezing. Since the building is located on a ledge on a hillside this always makes the upper parking lot truly dangerous even when sand and salt are put down on a Sunday morning. I am hoping some serious thought will be put into finding a better solution to managing all of this before we encounter the next round of snow.

Other than the winter, and one other minor instance, when a heating grate in the sanctuary broke when someone walked on it, all has remained rather normal. Our grounds are 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. The occasional

roof leak from shifting slate tiles and gutter maintenance is also handled by another outside contractor who will come on short notice when there is an issue of whatever nature.

Thankfully, in addition to so many of you that help keep First Parish a pleasant, friendly and safe building open to not only its members, but the public at large, we have two individuals that work very hard to accomplish this. Frank Peace our sexton, knows where everything is, how it works and will normally come back to work on a moment's notice when there are problems. This past year we honored Frank at the beginning of a worship service in October for his 10 plus years of service. Frank has also been assisted this past year by our other part-time custodian, William Brown. Will works quietly a few days a week and on Sunday afternoons and has been a welcome addition to the team.

To repeat what I've said in the past ... We are a tiny village that quietly works behind the scenes keeping First Parish a welcoming building, vibrantly alive, and 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 / FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN REPORT**

Our Financial Stewardship Commitment Campaign this year was highly influenced by Mark Ewert's report from his October 2013 visit concerning the financial health and future of First Parish in Brookline. Mark had outlined these concerns when he spoke to the congregation on the Sunday of his visit.

Our Parish Committee took his recommendations for changes in the perspective of First Parish in Brookline toward financial giving very seriously. From the fall onward, members of the Parish Committee addressed the congregation about giving that comes from a worldview of abundance rather than scarcity. In inspirational testimonials, the congregation heard from individual Parish Committee members as well as the Canvass Co-Chairs and others who worked on the Canvass, relating the importance of First Parish in their lives, and how their financial contributions would be increasing this fiscal year. With these testimonials in mind, our theme for the 2014-15 campaign was "Commit To Abundance".

The co-chairs, Sue Andrews and Alice Mark, along with Rev. Jim and Sonya Abbott, agreed during the planning stages that this would be a good year to canvass some of our members personally. In this way, we could hear from members about their vision for the church and how their giving could help achieve our goals. We asked First Parish members from the congregation as well as from the Parish Committee to personally contact 60 of our 175 households. This task was accomplished by 14 canvassers, 6 of whom are Parish Committee members.

1. Our end goal for fiscal year 2014-15 is to raise \$440,000 for our operating budget.
2. The following numbers represent what was known as of April 28, 2014.
3. Of 175 member households, 140 had turned in pledge forms, totaling \$393,973. Last year these same households had pledged \$322,586.
4. 63 households (48%) increased their pledge amount over last year. Of these, 19 households increased by more than \$1,000. This is a great accomplishment!
5. Our 6 top donors increased their pledges by a total of \$108,521. This amount is equal to 28% of the total pledged by April 28. In other words:
  - a. 3% of our member households pledged nearly 1/3 of the \$393,973 total.
  - b. It is important that we understand the implications of this statistic for the financial future of our church. We are over relying on our most generous donors.
6. 53 (40%) pledging households remained flat in their amount pledged compared to last year.
7. 15 (12%) pledging households decreased the amount of their pledge from last year's amount.
8. Over the year we lost 15 pledging households, and gained 5 new pledging households.
9. 35 member households had not yet pledged as of April 28. If those members do pledge an amount at least equal to their last year's pledge, we will come in very close to our goal of \$440,000. Efforts have been made and continue to be made to contact each of these 35 households.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the Parish Committee, as well as to Lori Day, Jamie Kim, Ray Wellbaum, Rob Guillemin, Karla Baehr our non-Parish Committee canvassers. This work can only be successful with many participants. Also our gratitude goes out to Sonya Abbott, who has kept up accurately with pledge amounts and provided encouragement all along the way.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Andrews and Alice Mark*

## **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

The mission of the Committee on Ministry is to consider, understand, facilitate, and support the evolving ministries of First Parish in Brookline, through monthly meetings with the ministers. Our agenda is adaptive and flexible, allowing for response to issues as they arise. The Committee on Ministry aspires to practice, promote and model right relationship and to help all members understand and live our safe congregation practices.

This year was the first official church year of Rev. Jim's senior ministry. Our committee had several conversations about adjustments both among the members of the congregation and the staff team to no longer having a co-ministry. At several separate meetings, we engaged with each of our ministers as well as our intern minister around topics of how they see their work here at First Parish, and how their work fits with the goals of the ministerial team. Those engaged with were Eliza Blanchard, Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa and Sarah Napoline.

We noted that the number of issues needing discussion were fewer than last year. Hopefully this is an indication of good adjustment to the changes our congregation has lived through since September of 2012.

Toward the end of this church year the committee began discussion of possible methods for congregational evaluation of our ministries.

*2013-2014: Sue Andrews, Chair; Corey Thomas, Co-chair; Janet Britcher, Michelle David, Jeff Cadow, and Jim Womack. Our members serve for three years on a rotating basis. Jeff Cadow and Corey Thomas will be leaving the Committee on Ministry this year.*

*Submitted by Sue Andrews for the Committee on Ministry*



## CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### BOOK CLUB

The First Parish Book Club experienced another wonderful year featuring a diverse selection of books, as shown by the list below! We've enjoyed sharing viewpoints, deep discussion, and a good number of laughs, as well!

- **June:** *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. This was the UUA's choice for a common read for 2012, putting the spotlight on racism in our justice system and how that system fails us as a society. The meeting was sponsored by the Diversity Caucus, the Social Action Committee, and the Book Club.
- **July:** *King Leopold's Ghost* by Adam Hochschild. A piercing look at the greed, vanity, ego and just plain moral bankruptcy underlying the creation and exploitation of the Belgian Congo.
- **August:** *Eight Girls Taking Pictures* by Whitney Otto. An interesting set of stories centered on eight fictional photographers spanning the last century, all based on actual people.
- **September:** *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* by Julian Barnes. Time travel from Noah to Chernobyl, art history, religious fervor (or not) - irony and the human condition as only Barnes can dish it up!
- **October:** *The Death of Artemio Cruz* by Carlos Fuentes. A study of power in Mexico from the civil war to the mid-20th century. Artemio's opportunism and ruthlessness earn him material success and the fear of associates, but the losses revealed as he lies dying far outweigh the gains.
- **November:** *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov. Considered one of the most important novels of the 20th century, this amazing literary romp and social commentary features the Master, Margarita, the Devil, a talking cat, Jesus, Judas, a migraine-suffering Pontius Pilate, and scenes based on actual places and events in Bulgakov's Moscow.
- **December:** *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich. A coming-of-age story highlighting legal issues on the reservation, racism, family and friendship, loyalty, and love.
- **January:** *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore* by Robin Sloan. Mystery, technology, novel approaches to bizarre puzzles -- all in a book with a glow-in-the-dark cover!
- **February:** *Saving Fish from Drowning* by Amy Tan. A group of self-absorbed American tourists run into lots of unexpected problems in Asia and show their ignorance of cultural differences in the process.
- **March:** *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman. The UUA common read for 2013, this book is an expose of the restaurant industry and culture. Sponsored along with the Social Action and Diversity groups, discussion centered around becoming knowledgeable about the practices of restaurants and using the information to choose which ones to patronize.
- **April:** *Life After Life* by Kate Atkinson. A literary Groundhog's Day, this novel presents episodes in the main character's life in several versions; little tweaks can make big differences, starting with whether she's still-born or not! Is this a study of the random luck and potential choices in life? of the creative process for an author fleshing out a story? Descriptions of the Blitz are particularly striking and critically acclaimed.
- **May:** *Blood Lines* by FP's own Paul McLean. A compelling story of the events and emotions Paul experienced as he and Jody grappled with their daughter's devastating diagnosis of severe aplastic anemia and the bone marrow transplant required to save her life. Paul candidly reveals his vulnerability, his fears and frustrations, his total dependence on disagreeing experts to help him make major decisions. He also discusses the stabilizing factors of faith, family, and an expanded community truly committed to lending support through the healing process and beyond.

We'd like to thank everyone who offered suggestions for books during the year, and to those who provided goodies, too! **There are no requirements for coming to book club.** If a book interests you, join us -- we welcome new faces!

## **FIRST PARISH KNITTERS**

First Parish Knitters gather monthly to work on a variety of projects. We share fellowship, great help with each other's knitting, crocheting or other handiwork projects and quality time replenishing ourselves.

We welcome all those who are interested in joining us.

Regular Contributors: Madeline Fine, Katrina Regan Ruderman, Mary Rogers, Molly Wiellette and Val Gunning,

## **MEDITATION SANGHA**

The FP Meditation Sangha has continued to serve our First Parish Community with different offerings this year.

The Sunday morning sitting group discontinued meeting as of November 2013 to explore if Thursday evening would serve the meditation group. Practice leaders: Almas Dossa and Ron Wilkinson are currently reviewing if the meditation group might be resumed.

Sangha members, Hank Reisner and Jean Ashland facilitated meditation at FP on Thursday evenings in the Fall 2013 through February 2014. The group discontinued meeting due to low attendance.

## **POETRY CIRCLE**

This group expanded some this year with the addition of three regular members. As a result, they now have eight regular members, with attendance of 5-8 members at each meeting.

This year they've discussed the poetry of:

Seamus Heaney, Eavan Boland, WB Yeats, Frank O'Hara, Allen Ginsberg, William Blake, and Maxine Kumin

This is an open group. New members are welcomed. They meet at 4:30pm on every second Monday afternoon, September through June.

## **VESPERS**

**Leaders:** Jean Ashland, Anne Copeland, and Jamie Redgrave

**Description:** Starting in January 2014, on the second Sunday of each month (7-8pm), a new worship opportunity 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 lay-led 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. Themes in 2014 were:

- Jan 2014 - Finding the Quiet Within
- Feb 2014 – Holding Ourselves in Kindness
- Mar 2014 – Mindfulness
- April 2014 - Forgiveness
- May 2014 – Exploring the Peace and Strength in Being “Good Enough”

**Participation:** Approximately 15 people have attended each Vespers Service – about 30 different people in all.

## **DEACONS REPORT**

2013-2014

**Members:** William Dwyer (Senior), Chris Beasley, Sheila Hussey, Laura Walters, Midge Wilcke, Bob Williamson and Jim Womack

**Purpose:** The Deacons are the designated elders of the parish. They act as the church's institutional memory, preserve our community's heritage and support the wellbeing of the congregation by being a strong presence in congregational life.

**Year's Activities:** In October, at the invitation of leaders of the Neighboring Faiths class, Laura Walters and Sheila Hussey met separately with class members and their parents to discuss the role of deacons throughout history and at First Parish. Parents in particular were interested in learning about this piece of First Parish history.

The deacons facilitated four communion services during the year (September 29, December 1, February 9, and April 13). Attendance at communion ranged from twelve to thirty participants. We no longer use the communion silver stored at the Museum of Fine Arts but rather the pottery chalice and candlesticks that were given to Reverend Martha Niebanck when she visited a Unitarian congregation in Transylvania several years ago. Members of that congregation made these pottery items and sent them as a gift to First Parish.

The deacons continue to represent the congregation as ushers at memorial services, ordinations and major church holidays. They have begun a tradition of inviting college students who are coming home for the holidays to usher at the Christmas Eve service.

**Next year:** The deacons remain committed to serving the congregation and aiding our minister(s) as called to do so.

*Respectfully submitted,  
William Dwyer, Senior Deacon  
Chris Beasley  
Sheila Hussey  
Laura Walters  
Midge Wilcke  
Bob Williamson  
Jim Womack*

## **DIVERSITY CAUCUS**

Annual Report 2014

Co-Chairs: Almas Dossa and Ronald Wilkinson

Current committee: Ann Gilmore, Nora Collins, Jody Leader, Kirsten McIntire, Martha Leader, Priscilla Brown, Cindy Thames, Gene Thompson-Grove, Rev. Maria Cristina.

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.

This year the Diversity Caucus has continued work on raising our own awareness and understanding of racial history and how it plays out in our community. Additionally, we have created multiple occasions to invite the whole congregation to join us on these conversations. We invite the participation of all members, from those who have looked deeply at these issues to those who are interested in learning more in community.

Past, ongoing, and future events for the First Parish community in 2013-2014 are as follows:

- Film series followed by group discussion:
  - A. *October, 2013: Cracking the Codes: the system of racial inequity*
  - B. *January, 2014: Daughter from Danang*
  - C. *April, 2014: The House I live in (co-sponsored by the Social Action Forum)*
- Multicultural workshop series organized by Rev. Maria Cristina and attended by diversity caucus members and the larger congregation
  - A. *Growing Heart, Building Bridges, January and February, 2014: led by Rev. Mykal Slack*
  - B. *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit, March and April, 2014: Leadership for a Multicultural Age, led by Rev. Maria Cristina*
  - C. *Right Relationships workshop,, April, 2014: led by DRUUMM and ARE (Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries and Allies for Racial Equity)*
- Book club reading in March: *Behind the Kitchen Door*, by Saru Jayaraman (co-sponsored by the Book club and Social Action Forum).
- Attended along with members of the congregation a talk by Michelle Alexander, author of "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the age of color blindness"
- Along with the Social Action Forum have worked on extending our efforts outside our congregation by working on the Jobs Not Jails movement:
  - A. *Attended along with members of the congregation, the UU Mass Action organizational workshop on bringing the Jobs Not Jails movement to our congregation*
  - B. *Sponsored the People's Cafe to raise money for the Jobs not Jails movement.*
  - C. *Collected signatures for the legislature on the Jobs not Jails movement*

- In addition, the Diversity Caucus will:
  - A. be attending the May 2014 Annual Growing Racial and Cultural Equity Summit organized by the Clara Barton and Mass Bay Districts.*
  - B. continue to work with the RE committee and Social Action Committee on matters related to diversity and inequality.*

We very much thank Rev. Jim and Rev. Maria Cristina who have supported our growth and have integrated diversity into every service!

## **INVESTMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

2013-2014

As of March 31, 2014 (latest date available), the value of our endowment invested with the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF) stood at \$2,625,885. The one year total return for the UUCEF was 9.0% net of fees, slightly below the median return for its peer group. Nevertheless, it should be noted that over time, the fund has outperformed its peers by a respectable margin. In addition, the fund is well diversified and is structured so as to have the benefit of mitigating risk during periods of market turbulence, all the while being aligned with Unitarian Universalist values. (For more detailed information on the UUCEF performance data, market reports, holdings and Socially Responsible Investing, please log on to [www.uua/uucef/index](http://www.uua/uucef/index).)

The budget of The First Parish in Brookline for the fiscal year, July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, includes withdrawals from the endowment of \$129,000 -- \$89,000 for operations and \$40,000 for capital expenditures. It is expected that the full budgeted amount will be utilized by fiscal year-end. In addition, on February 1, 2014 (authorized by a vote of the FPB members on November 17, 2013), \$90,000 was withdrawn from the endowment in order to pay the outstanding balance for restoration work done by the Serpentino Stained Glass Studio on the side lancets of the Lowell/Whitman memorial window. We look forward to their reinstallation in the sanctuary this coming June.

In last year's report from the Investment Committee, we asked that today's members and friends consider making a provision for our endowment in their estate plans. With combined sadness and gratitude we thank our good friend and fellow member, Jane Hoey, who passed away on June 25, 2013, for providing for a very generous gift from her estate to be added to the endowment. Jane is very much missed, especially by the young members of FPB who were mentored by her over the years.

Unless voted otherwise by the FPB members at this year's Annual Meeting, this will be the last stand-alone report of the Investment Committee. It is anticipated that the committee will be disbanded and that its duties will be combined with those of the Treasurer's going forward. Over the years, First Parish in Brookline has been blessed by having several external asset managers who have prudently guided our endowment toward very respectable returns through the vagaries of the financial markets. We anticipate that this will continue through our relationship with the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund. We have been very blessed indeed.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*William Dwyer*  
*Chair, Investment Committee*

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LDC)**

**Prelude** - The LDC had an extremely productive, spiritually rewarding, and fun year. Even though we got a late start and weren't able to gather for our first meeting until well into September, we seemed to quickly gel as a team. It may be that our monthly practice of meeting at one of our homes over a potluck meal and wine helped us coalesce with ease.

### **Committee Membership and Structure**

Minimum # of Members:

# of Co/Chairperson/s: 1

# of Vice-Chairperson/s: 1

Term of Membership: 3    Renewable: no

Members: Elena Garofoli, Chair; Martin Thomson, Vice-Chair; Jeff Cadow; Andrea Willett; Margaret Williams; Barbara Simonetti

### **Mission/Responsibilities**

- Submit nominations for RE, Parish Committee and Leadership Development Committee prior to Annual Meeting
- Identify and connect individuals with leadership opportunities at First Parish
- Develop Leadership skills in the First Parish community
- Offer support and consultation to leadership and committees
- Help make leadership a spiritual practice that contributes to the ongoing health and sustainability of First Parish

### **Partners/Stakeholders**

Congregation; Minister; Parish Committee; Welcoming Committee;  
Religious Exploration Committee; District

### **2013-14 Goals and Subsequent Accomplishments**

#### **1. Complete Covenant**

We revised the committee covenant from the previous year, and regularly referred to it at meetings over the course of the year.

#### **2. Create/Revise Charter**

In tandem with revising the covenant, we revised and updated our charter, as well as created a charter template in a forms fill-in format that can easily be used by all other committees. We approached the Parish Committee (PC) in hopes of this document and the practice of charter creation being endorsed by the PC for use by all First Parish committees, but further action on this was postponed by the PC.

#### **3. Interview and Cultivate Supportive Relationships with all First Parish Committee Chairs**

In one of our major efforts this year, each FP committee listed in church documentation was "adopted" by an LDC member who served as a liaison to that committee. We also created a standard committee interview form.

In an effort to obtain a sense of congregational-wide committee health across the congregation, we interviewed each committee chair with the previously mentioned form. Results of this initiative were summarized and reported to the PC chair and to our First Parish field education student.

Concomitant with this goal has been the ongoing and regular communication between the chairs of the PC and LDC.

#### 4. Connect members with transformational leadership opportunities

We've just begun this major work, and to-date, this effort has manifested in four different ways. As part of our committee interview process we asked committee chairs to identify committee members who they thought showed leadership promise. We also asked the committee chairs themselves to self-identify interest in PC and/or LDC participation for themselves.

Secondly, we adopted the first-ever self-nomination process for the Parish Committee. The LDC still owns the responsibility for nominating members to serve on the PC, but in attempt to broaden the candidate pool and make the process more transparent and egalitarian, we created a process by which FP members could nominate themselves to the PC.

The process itself involved determining selection criteria based on the work done by the PC, creating a web-based form available from the FP website, and publicizing, and then monitoring via web form-generated statistics the entire process. Since the writing of the report is occurring before the Annual Meeting we are unable comment on the success of this approach.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, we have established a connection with a district leadership development resource, Doug Zalinsky. As a result of our committee interviews, we realized there exists a certain amount of "organizational confusion" that among the committees. Chairs reported a lack of clarity about their mission, how to accomplish goals, and how to sustain membership.

Doug has done extensive growth and organizational development-related work with congregations in the Mass Bay district, and he shared with us that UU congregations typically feel growing pains around the 250 – 300 membership level, which is the size range of First Parish. We are advocating for FP leadership to meet with Doug to determine future possible paths and approaches for growth.

Finally, because we are committed to supporting leadership development at all levels, this year LDC voted to award our budget in total to support FP youth who want to attend GA.

### **2014-2016 Goals**

Our goal is to create a clear and transparent path and development process for leadership at all levels of the organization, from first-joining to Chair of the Parish Committee.



## **MUSIC DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

*Music Director: Keith Kirchoff, 2010-present*

**The Choirs:** We had a very busy musical year this year, with exciting music nearly every Sunday! The music was led each Sunday by one of two choirs or the First Parish Band:

- **Chancel Choir** – The Chancel Choir consists of roughly 12-25 singers. All are volunteers with the exception of four paid section leaders. 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.
- **First Parish Band** – The First Parish Band consists of Landon Rose, Matthew Lawrence, and Djems Domerson. The band is a rock oriented ensemble that played versions of new and classic rock songs, as well as funky arrangements of traditional hymns. This ensemble was always joined by the choir, and performed on four Sundays throughout the year.

**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. Three of the four accepted, and so we welcomed back soprano Elizabeth McIntire, alto Oriana Dunlop, and tenor Adrian Jones. Baritone Zack Rabin sang with us until February, at which point he accepted a position in Mississippi. Starting in May, the choir will welcome baritone RaShaun Campbell as the new baritone section leader.

**Assistants:** Adrian Jones led choir rehearsals in my absence, and we welcomed three different piano accompanists to fill in on Sunday mornings: Ellie Boynton, Pamela Kristan, and Elaine Rombola.

**Guest Musicians:** In April we welcomed guest percussionist Miki Ringquist to join us in a performance of Steve Reich's *Tehillim*, and at Christmas, harpist Barbara Poeschl-Edrich joined the choir for a performance of Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. All other guest musicians were drawn from the congregation. In addition to the members of The First Parish Band, these volunteers have included Ed Loechler, Martha Leader, Rudy Avery, and Jon Hazilla.

**Christmas:** At Christmas, the choir welcomed harpist Barbara Poeschl-Edrich for a performance of Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*.

**Easter:** At Easter, the Chancel Choir commissioned composer Matthew McConnell to compose a special introit: *Light of Day Break Forth!* The choir also shared *Lord of the Dance* arranged by David Willcocks, *Easter Day* by Dominick Argento, and *Da Pacem Domine* by Arvo Pärt.

**Music Sunday:** We had a contemplative Music Sunday this year, performing new works all written within the past couple of years. In addition to my own *Aum* (a seven minute meditation for chorus), the chancel choir also sang *Mille Regretz* for choir and live electronics by Douglass Geers and *My Silence Now Speaks for Me* by Joseph Gentry Stephens.

## **PARISH ADMINISTRATION**

2013-2014

There's this saying, church time and regular time. To me it seems as if it was only yesterday that we began our journey, but in reality this is our ninth year together. Repeat nine years ... I'm amazed, I don't know about you. So while they say there is church time, it certainly flies by just like regular time.

There's also this saying, the more things change, the more they stay the same and this holds true here too. Some days it's blissfully silent and projects can be accomplished without any interruptions. Other days though, it remains an interesting juggling act to deal with the many requests that come in from all sorts of individuals throughout the year. About the only constant is our resident Ghost who still seems to get rattled, and when it does, it can't remember to turn out lights, lock doors, shut windows or turn off machinery. It's reassuring to know that this Ghost is ever present even in our fast paced world and doesn't seem to want to change.

But what does the Parish Administrator do you ask? Primarily I'm a first responder on a daily basis. Parishioners call about a tragedy in their life seeking pastoral comfort. Old buildings can be problematic and there is always one issue after another. Computer equipment will break down needing to be replaced almost immediately. The public at large will call seeking information about rentals, which then need to be negotiated, as many do not understand that we don't have the latest and greatest facility. Maintaining the church calendar, which seems never to be in sync, no matter how hard one tries, is truly a daily challenge.

Keeping on top of all of this and communicating in today's techno advanced world certainly keeps me on my toes. Some mornings I'm drowning in emails and can have upwards of over 70 or more to respond to when I first turn the computer on. I literally hardly ever get my foot in the door without hearing about some issue that must be responded to and now that many are "friends" on Facebook, I'll hear about issues via that method too on weekends.

Then there's maintaining the financial record system, which on one hand is relatively straight forward, on another is very time consuming and includes not only the daily operational accounting procedures one would expect, but also includes maintaining the pledge tracking system of each parishioner and their donations throughout the year. I also generate and closely review month end financial reports which are passed onto the Treasurer and Senior Minister, in addition to working closely with them throughout the year on financial matters and in particular during the yearly budgeting process.

Yet that's not all that administration is responsible for and this year I've asked Nancy Natowitz (*our administrative assistant*) to write up a report, about everything she handles for all of us, as well. She continues to be an extremely valuable member of the team and I'm very thankful she is here.

So it's been nine years, and the Great Spirit willing, I'm looking forward to spending more years with you and sincerely thank everyone for your continued presence, kindness, assistance and wonderful creative spirits. You've all made it a year full of blessings, more than you can imagine.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Sonya A. Abbott, Parish Administrator*

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE**

2013-2014

I have been working at First Parish for 2½ years, and my responsibilities have certainly grown during that time. Primarily I support the Parish Administrator, as well as the rest of the staff, in various ways, in addition to managing some projects, such as RE Registration and weekly attendance reporting on my own.

Most of the tasks I handle are behind the scenes, such as generating nametags for the sanctuary, following up with those offering to donate flowers, updating website text, creating planning calendars for staff use. I also perform extensive data entry (visitor info, canvass info) and reporting of all types (membership reporting, RE reporting) plus manage the RE list servs, and of course the usual photocopying and mail stuffing.

Finally, I am responsible for maintaining the consistency and integrity of parishioner data across applications (*Church Windows, UUA Directory, and the on-line photo directory*) and work with most of the staff to gather the information and produce the Order of Service you see each week.

All this makes for a lot to fit into about 16 hours a week! It has been great getting to know members of First Parish and it is nice being able to put names from the database together with faces of parishioners when you stop in the office.

*Thank you,  
Nancy Natowitz,  
Administrative Assistant*

## **RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE - 2013-2014**

**Members:** Karen Kepler, Chair, Dave Demerjian, Bijan Etemad-Gilbertson, Sarah Griffen, Rob Guillemin, Alice Mark, Julie Palmer, Scott Ullrich

We enrolled one hundred twenty-one children and youth who were taught by forty volunteer teachers, and two paid teachers (in nursery and preschool). Average Sunday class attendance was 64). Classes/curriculum included: Nursery; Celebrating Me and My World (preschool); *Spirit Play*; Love Will Guide Us; Windows and Mirrors, Neighboring Faiths; OWL (Our Whole Lives – a part of the three year Coming of Age program); and Senior High Youth (SHY) Group.

### **RE Committee Goals**

- Adopt a committee charter.
- 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.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment for children and youth so that they think of First Parish as their church home.

### **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. Committee Charter provided to Parish Committee.
2. Successful mid-year mini-retreat at which the committee prioritized goals and responsibilities.
3. Well designed and facilitated monthly meetings, with agendas posted ahead of time, with a check-in/centering reading or exercise, and a note taker.
4. An annual RE Calendar, which lays out the tasks of the RE Committee month by month.
5. A Teacher recruitment calendar, plan, process and supporting documents.
6. Successful teacher recruitment/staffing model in place by September 2013 RE program start date.
7. Brought back the Halloween Party which provided SHY with the opportunity to create a “haunted church” for the younger RE kids.
8. Brought back the Easter-Egg Hunt.
9. Facilitated class breakfasts, pot-lucks and other opportunities for RE classroom teachers, kids and parents to interact out-side of the Sunday morning classroom.

10. Held a Teacher appreciation breakfast followed by RE Sunday service at which teachers were thanked first by the REC and then by the congregation for their dedication and support of the RE program.
11. Piloted a new format for RE Sunday service which allowed for the congregation to visit RE classrooms and engage with students and teachers.
12. Continuation of last year's Preschool Classroom model comprised of a paid teacher who is there every week, providing consistency for the children.
13. Continuation of Sunday Morning Greeters – a collaboration between the RE Committee and the Welcoming Committee
14. Reignited the Senior High Youth Group with a focus toward GA attendance in June 2014.

### **Challenges**

1. The SHY program needs to be strengthened and would benefit from a dedicated professional advisor. The current program experiences intermittent attendance on the part of the senior high youth, many of whom are wrestling with a full schedule of activities. Attendance in the beginning of the church year was higher than at the middle/end of the year – suggesting that the youth were willing to give it a try, but that many decided to allocate their time elsewhere as the year progressed. The REC has requested that the church hire a part-time, experienced, paid youth advisor for the 2014-2014 church year. The REC would like to see the SHY become more involved with the UU denomination, social action and service opportunities but does not think this can happen without a dedicated advisor. Also, the large size of the current classes in the early elementary grades (20+ per grade) requires advanced planning for their SHY experiences so that there is a strong program available to them.
2. Classroom space continues to be a problem. There are too few adequately sized spaces available on Sunday morning. Although the REC has tried to hold programs at alternative times, Sunday morning continues to be the preferred time slot.
3. The REC recognizes that we have a diversity of learners in our classes. We aspire to break away from a Sunday morning classroom model that is almost identical to the classrooms that children experience Monday – Friday. We are committed to educating ourselves – and our RE teachers – about “universal designs for learning” which include multiple modalities, so all children can access the curriculum. This requires a careful examination of the UU curricula we choose, with an eye toward the kinds of demands each curriculum places on children (i.e. language, attention, social cognition, working memory, etc.), and development of ways to adapt the UU curriculum we choose so all children are safe and feel comfortable in our classes.
4. We continue to provide special multi-age programs in lieu of regular classes on low attendance Sundays (often long week-ends). These are currently designed to match the theme of the worship service being offered that day in the Sanctuary. We would like these to be tied more closely to social action projects that the general congregation is engaged with but have not had much input from the congregation/social action committee about this effort.

## **DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION**

**Position Description:** The Director of Religious Education (DRE) is responsible for developing and maintaining a strong program for children and youth faith development at First Parish. As a member of the staff team the DRE brings RE activities and concerns to the staff and encourages integration of children and youth in all aspects of the community. As a member of the worship team, the DRE collaborates with the Ministers, Ministerial intern, Music Director and membership coordinator to help craft worship that is vibrant and meaningful for all ages. The DRE provides The DRE reports directly to the Senior Minister.

*Submitted by: Rebecca Keller Scholl, Director of Religious Exploration*

\* \* \* \* \*

As my third year as Director of Religious Exploration at First Parish in Brookline winds down, I continue to be grateful for the spirit of community and the love in this congregation. I am part of a staff team that works tirelessly to discover ways to nurture the vibrant vision of this congregation and support ways for members to live out their faith. I am thankful for every small but deeply meaningful exchange with children, youth, and adults. I look forward to another year of shared ministry as each individuals searches to make meaning and deepen their personal faith.

### **Highlights:**

#### **Teaching**

- This past year's 40 volunteer teachers brought a richness of experience and depth of faith to the classes they enriched. Our Teacher Appreciation and RE Sunday were joyful and a true celebration of the gift of spending time with children.

#### **Children and Worship:**

- We held seven Multigenerational worship services which were well received. We incorporated more worship art and movement into these services
- We increased the number of teaching Sundays by reducing the number of Multigen and Multiage (M.A.D.) Sundays. On the Multiage Sundays the children learned of the theme in worship and then left the Sanctuary to engage in a M.A.D. activity held in Pierce Hall for all ages.
- Children continue to be a part of the first 15-20 minutes of Sanctuary worship on 3 or 4 Sundays a month. These weeks there is a Time for All Ages with a theme-based message or Candles of Joy and Concern.

#### **Collaborations:**

- Earth Based Traditions Group - bringing child friendly engagement to the Earth Based Celebrations and creating a Solstice themed M.A.D. Sunday activity.
- Diversity, Parish Committee and RE - worked with representatives from these committees to address issues of diversity and inclusion for all ages in the life of the church.

#### **Denominational Involvement**

- Vice President: North Atlantic Chapter of LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association)
- Young People's Dean Executive Team: Lifespan Religious Education Week at Star Island
- Convener: NARL Annual Retreat
- Delegate: CB/MBD Annual Meeting

### **Professional Development**

- LREDA Annual Fall Conference
- Lifespan Religious Education Week: Star Island - Professional Boundaries in Religious Education
- Responding to the Bombings in Boston - A conversation for Leaders in Ministry: Boston College School of Theology and Ministry
- In Quest of The Jewish Mary: Boston College School of Theology and Ministry
- Building a Vocal Community: Workshop with Ysaye Barnwell - CB/MBD
- Full Week Faith Collegial Conversations -CB/MBD
- Growing Hearts and Building Bridges - FPB

### **Special thanks...**

...to an inspiring and engaged congregation, to all the wonderfully dedicated volunteers, to an incredible collection of colleagues who make coming to work so joyful, to a smart, thoughtful and patient RE Committee, and to the children and young who spontaneously teach all of us each day what is important.

## **SOCIAL ACTION ANNUAL REPORT**

Co-Chairs: Clint Richmond and Jami Jordan

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

**Our Actions:** We are first inspired by the Seven Principles of our faith. In the face of so much need, we focus on three thematic initiatives. We also strive to build upon and integrate with the efforts of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UUMassAction Network, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry. Our initiatives are **Standing on the Side of Love, Economic Justice, and the Environment.**

This year, over half of the congregation's adults and youth participated in some kind of Social Action activity. And over \$20,000 was given to help the work of others. We also incorporate our action into four Sunday services during the year. This usually includes testimony from members who participated in social action and a special collection.

### ***Standing on the Side of Love:***

- **We stood against mass incarceration.** We supported the Jobs Not Jails initiative here in Massachusetts. We educated ourselves about the issue at a district workshop. We signed petitions that were delivered at the State House. We sponsored a People's Café with the Diversity Caucus that raised \$1700 for Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement (EPOCA). Over 20 people joined with other UU congregations at a rally on Boston Common. We called legislators about the set of state bills.
- **We fought HIV and AIDS** at the Harbor to the Bay bike ride from Boston to Provincetown. Team First Parish, 6 riders and 12 pit crew of all ages, raised \$10,000 in this all-volunteer, grass-roots fundraiser. We rode, we made snacks, and we ran a pit stop, all under the fearless leadership of Linda Smith and Madeline Fine. The next ride is September 20, 2014.
- **We supported immigration reform.** The Immigration Committee continued to make strides on this important and very timely issue. First Parish affirmed the decision to join Boston New Sanctuary at our 2011 Annual Meeting, which has included attending and hosting monthly gatherings, and joining vigils at the Suffolk County Detention Center. At our November Social Action service on this topic, the special collection benefitted Centro Presente. Special thanks to Linda and Jack Smith for leading our immigration efforts since the beginning.
- **We walked in witness and support.** In May, we are again expanding our presence at the Mother's Day Walk for Peace and against gun violence. We also donated to this cause. In June, we look forward to the Boston Aids Walk on the 1st, and with continuing the energy from RE and the Youth, for Boston Pride Parade on the 14th. Thanks to Linda Smith and Bijan Etemad-Gilbertson for again organizing our Pride participation.
- **We partnered with our Diversity Caucus** for the second year of their Friday-night film series and numerous events. The largest film night was the "The House I Live In" as part of the Jobs Not Jails campaign, which was attended by about 30 people including people from outside of First Parish.



### **Environment Initiative:**

- **We dedicated our Environment Initiative Special Collection to 350ma.org.** We raised almost \$1000 inspired by testimony from Carol Spitzer and Greg Caplan.
- **Almost 100 people signed a ballot initiative** for the expanded Bottle Bill that will go to the voters this November. Thanks to Sheila Hussey for leading this.

### **Economic Justice:**

- **Almost 100 people signed two ballot initiatives** for Raise Up Massachusetts to increase the minimum wage and provide earned sick leave. These will go to the voters this November.
- **We helped feed to the homeless** at St. Francis House working shoulder-to-shoulder with their wonderful kitchen staff on Saturdays as requested. New this year was a successful clothing drive by First Parish members. Many thanks to Susan Caplan for organizing all these efforts.
- **We serve with the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury.** We thank Chip DeWitt for his service on the Board of the UUUM.
- **We honor our commitment with Jericho Road Roxbury,** in partnership with the UUUM, First Parish in Milton and First Church in Boston. The program has entered its second full year. Specialized volunteers for Roxbury non-profits have been placed. Gail and Karla Baehr serve on the Steering Committee.
- **We partner with 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 12; and numerous families sponsor individual children as well. We completed a third congregational service trip to Guatemala in April led by Barbara Simonetti and Charles Sandmel. Jack and Linda Smith, Jim Womack and Anne Copeland also volunteer business management services to Common Hope. The 13-member Vision Team included four youth and our intern minister, Sarah. We raised funds for Common Hope through a Holiday Fair. Other FPeres gave goods for the team to carry.
- **We donated non-perishable foods** to the Brookline Food Pantry all year long. Thanks to Ed Loechler and Leslie Spaneas for delivering our donations once a month.
- **We value our ties to UU Social Action.** We continue to be congregational members of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and UU Mass Action. Our largest special collection of the year was given to the UUSC and the UUUM. We had good turnout for this year's UUA Common Read book, *Behind the Kitchen Door*, a book about economic injustice, co-sponsored by the First Parish Book Club and our Diversity Caucus. We expect to participate again in UU Mass Action Advocacy Day in May.

**Our Vision:** Our vision is for our congregation to live out our principles inside the church and in the wider community. And, in following our vision, that First Parish is seen as an active in the community and a place to learn about and respond to the moral imperatives that derive from our faith. We know this from the survey we took this winter, which we are using to help guide our efforts. We look forward to continuing to tap the passion of our ever-evolving community and to see everyone at First Parish in Brookline come together in making a better world.

Thank you, Jami for serving as co-chair for the past two years. Your involvement has been a blessing.

## **STAINED GLASS COMMITTEE**

**Committee Members:** Sue Andrews, Jeff Cadow, Sally Dwyer, Frank Hutchins, Sheila Hussey, Chair, and Skye Kramer.

**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.

**Year's Activities:** On Sunday, October 6 our sanctuary welcomed forty stained glass enthusiasts brought to us by the Charles J. Connick Foundation Fall 2013 Tour. Frank Hutchins added his expert knowledge to that of the tour lecturer to explain the highlights of our rich collection.

The highlight of our year was the nearly unanimous congregational vote, taken twice, allowing the withdrawal of \$90,000 from our endowment to complete payment for the restoration of the Lowell Memorial window lancets. Two boxes of moldy stained glass removed from our damp basement in October 2010 are now two beautifully restored lancets about to be reinstalled.

**Tasks:** Our next task is to organize a celebration worthy of the lancet restoration. A new stained glass brochure incorporating colored pictures is planned and we will continue to look for funding opportunities for remaining restoration needs.

**Thank you:** We extend heartfelt thanks to all of our fellow congregants for coming to two congregational meetings to approve using endowment funds to complete payment for the lancet restoration. Thank you.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sheila Hussey*

## TEACHING PARISH COMMITTEE

**Committee Members:** Jack Smith-Chair, Sheila Hussey, Andrew Maryniuk, Stacey Raczek, and Bob Williamson.

**Mission:** Our mission is to provide support and feedback to Sarah Napoline during her two-year ministerial internship at First Parish.

**Year's Activities:** This was the final year of Sarah's 2-year ministerial internship. Monthly meetings with Sarah provide an opportunity for discussion of and feedback on her experiences at First Parish. We included as part of meetings "experiential learning" where Sarah would share with the committee experiences key to her development and learning.

Key activities included completing the mid program review of Sarah's internship by the committee, Rev Jim, and Sarah and completing second year leaning goals for Andover Newton with Sarah. In addition to these required tasks the committee and Sarah wrote a plan in December to define important experiences and learnings for her remaining time at First Parish. We reviewed this document at our meetings and updated as new ideas emerged.

In March Sarah successfully met with her UUA committee that declared her ready for ordination! The Teaching Parish Committee provided support for Sarah prior to this and celebrated with her afterwards. We are very proud of Sarah's accomplishment

**Thank you:** We thank all congregation members and staff who have once again welcomed and provided ministerial intern into our congregation. Our commitment to being a teaching parish matters to our denomination.

**Remembrance:** The committee and Sarah wish to remember Jane Hoey who led this committee for the first year and died June 2013. Jane loved First Parish and loved doing this work.

*Respectfully submitted,  
The TPC*

## **MINISTERIAL INTERN**

Dear friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I prepare to leave you after two years as your ministerial intern. I came to First Parish after only two semesters of theological education and five years out of college, feeling confident in my abilities but nervous facing the powerful responsibility of helping to guide and support a faith community. It has been an honor to journey with you through the transition out of co-ministry. I am constantly impressed by the way you have built beloved community, from the initial congregational conversations to this year's detailed second-minister search process. Through it all, the community has continued to grow and stretch, finding new ways to become engaged in social action, committing to faith formation across the generations, and creating a radical welcome in weekly worship.

Amongst a busy two years in transition, you have nurtured and inspired me in my growth. Committing to a two-year internship while I was still in school meant a busy schedule and continued development, but Brookline has supported me every step of the way. I am proud of the work I have done here, and intensely grateful for your support in this experience of congregational ministry. I will endeavor to live up to the legacy of excellence in ministry and congregational covenant that you have instilled in me. I feel incredibly well prepared as I enter preliminary fellowship in the Unitarian Universalist movement, and as I pursue ordination and enter search later this year.

**WORSHIP** - It is a blessing and joy to worship together on Sunday mornings. I have preached and led fifteen worship services these past two years at First Parish, and provided worship support through readings, prayers and stories for nearly thirty more. I had the extraordinary experience of planning and co-leading worship with many groups over the course of my tenure at First Parish; I worked with the Earth-Based Traditions group to create worship on both transcending the gender binary and the winter solstice, a multigenerational worship with the RE team on the shared ministry of religious education, and a youth worship service centered around staying young at heart. It was wonderful to collaborate with Keith Kirchoff, the First Parish band, and the First Parish choir to find music that fit seamlessly, creating a powerful atmosphere of reverence and joy. Thank you for your critiques and reflections on my sermons; your thoughtful input has helped me to improve and develop my skills as a preacher.

**MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT and PASTORAL CARE** - As my first formal ministerial position, this community has helped me grow into my own ministerial authority and presence. This community has offered space for me to explore my theology, craft worship services that feel authentic and holy, care for parishioners, and listen and work with devotion. Over the course of the last two years, I met with a number of people of all ages for formal and informal pastoral care; it has been a privilege and a blessing to walk with all of you on your spiritual journeys. When Jane Hoey was diagnosed with aggressive cancer last March, our experiences together became a benchmark in my formation as a pastoral minister. I cannot express how much Jane has meant to me, how much I miss her beautiful smile and her sharp wit, or how much she taught me about pastoral care. She loved this community, and in her final months, you loved her right back. Special thanks to the gifted pastoral care associates and all the unofficial First Parish caretakers, who have rallied to take care of this community in more ways than I can count. You have all taught me how to embody love in community.

**TRANSITION and CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS** - Perhaps the most impressive experiences I've had over these last two years were during the facilitated conversations about the future of this congregation. The transition from co-ministry to where we are today has been a demanding and prolific journey, and one this community has approached with grace and fortitude. There has been a succession of deliberate steps that continue to sustain this congregation: the celebration of Rev. Martha's retirement, the intentional discussions surrounding the ministry of this congregation, calling Rev. Jim as senior pastor, rejoicing in the gifts Rev. Maria Cristina has offered, creating a self-nominated second minister search committee, and following through on a diverse and committed search process. Being able to witness and support these congregational conversations is an incredibly unique experience for a ministerial intern, and one I treasure greatly. Thank you for showing me how to commit to community and how to move forward with faith.

**ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES** - These past two years I have had the opportunity to experience and teach a number of adult spiritual development courses. I am grateful to the spiritual autobiography group from the autumn of my first year in Brookline, and to the dedicated Bible Study participants. I am especially thankful to everyone who participated in the two groups I lead: the Cakes for the Queen of Heaven course last year and the Neighboring Faiths for Adults class this spring. Both groups have been filled with interesting, engaging conversations, lively discussions, and deeper reflections. Thank you for trusting me with your questions, your curiosities, and your hopes. I am a stronger leader, teacher, and student because of your dedication and support.

**TEACHING PARISH COMMITTEE** - My teaching parish committee has been a stalwart support throughout these two years of ministry, although we have had our fair share of turmoil. My dedicated cheerleader and committee chair, Jane Hoey, was diagnosed with cancer last March, and passed away last June. We are all indebted to Jane's enthusiasm and devotion to this congregation. We carry her in our hearts.

My beloved TPC embodies the words we often use to close our committee meetings: They create a group that performs ministry (and helps me grow, and reflect) in ways I could never do alone, and I am eternally grateful. Special thanks to Jack Smith for stepping up as chair of the committee in my second year; your support has been irreplaceable. Thanks to former members Emily Walton and Gerry Leader, and to this year's dedicated crew of Jack, Sheila Hussey, Stacey Raczek, Bob Williamson, and Andrew Maryniuk. Dear friends: thank you for walking with me along this journey. I appreciated your patience as I learned to turn to you for advice and support; learning to ask for help is a difficult lesson, and you taught it with tenderness. Thank you for your commitment to the future of the Unitarian Universalist ministry and to the health and strength of our denomination. Thank you for the blessings of your time and energy; I hope I will make you proud.

**STAFF** - If I had to describe my experiences with the staff in Brookline it would be with one word: spoiled. The talented, brilliant, considerate, thoughtful staff team in Brookline has spoiled me for future staff teams, and set the gold standard for how to work efficiently and cooperatively toward the common mission. I worked closely with each staff member at one point or another, and considered it an immeasurable blessing to have such a dedicated crew to work with.

Thank you to Sonya, who has taught me diligence and appreciation, who keeps all of us on our toes, and who loves this congregation as if it were her own. Thank you to Keith, whose talent and well-honed skill continue to amaze me, and whose sense of humor and dedication to our choir I deeply admire. Thank you to sextons Frank and Will, who work to keep our physical ministry in wonderful condition, and whose behind-the-scenes ministry of nurturing continues to sustain us. Thank you to Rebecca, a dear friend and colleague, whose enthusiasm and joy for faith formation is contagious and inspiring, and whose dedication to this denomination is delightful. Thank you to Rev. Maria Cristina, whose authenticity and passion for justice-making reminds me that there is still so much work to be done, and whose kindheartedness reminds me that it starts with love.

Finally, thank you to Rev. Jim. You have been my advocate and supporter from the very beginning. When I first talked to you about the trajectory of my calling, I had no idea just where it would lead. Three years later, and I'm still catching up! You have a brilliant mind, a kind heart, and a deep passion for ministry. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and experience, and helping guide me through the credentialing experience. I am honored and proud to have been your intern.

I'll leave you with words from Mary Oliver, poet and accidental theologian. She has offered abundant wisdom, but these specific lines from *In Blackwater Woods* are echoing in my heart right now:

*“To live in this world  
you must be able  
to do three things:  
to love what is mortal;  
to hold it  
against your bones knowing  
your own life depends on it;  
and, when the time comes to let it  
go,  
to let it go.”*

You have showed me how to love what is mortal, I know my life has certainly depended on it, and I am learning to let it go.

Thank you for your love and your lessons; I will miss you all dearly.

*In faith,  
Sarah J. Napoline*

## **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

2013-2014 Annual Report

**Chair:** Ellie Boynton

**Members:** Sonya Abbott and Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblom

**Mission Statement:** To help the 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 2013-2014:**

- Kept website updated with sermons and committee reports.
- Purchased and set up new desktop computer for minister's office.
- Implemented new system for backing up all files to external hard drive
- Added online payment option for donations (one-time and recurring) to website.
- Starting working on redesign of website that will be responsive (work well on all devices)

### **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.
- Decided not to create members-only area of website as there is no real need for it and may make people feel unwelcome.

### **Goals for 2014-2015:**

- If website redesign not complete by end of fiscal 2014, then finish it during Summer 2014.
- Continued support of church staff and consideration of equipment upgrades/replacement.
- Look into further improvements to wireless network; possible part of capital campaign.
- Continued development and updating of website to meet congregation's needs, including addition of audio recordings and/or live streaming of sermons or entire services, new content including online forms and payment options for religious exploration, and enhanced interactivity.

### **Thanks to...**

- Sonya Abbott and Nancy Natowitz, for continually updating content on the website and for support and advice.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Ellie Boynton*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

As a "Policy Governance" church, First Parish's staff has responsibility for the budgeting, implementation and monitoring of our finances. Specifically, Sonya Abbott, Parish Administrator, and Rev. Jim Sherblom are tasked with developing our budget, producing financial statements, managing expenditures to stay within the budget, and drawing on the endowment as needed to cover our funding needs. They do so with active input and oversight from the Treasurer and Parish Committee.

For Fiscal Year 2014, excluding the \$100,000 gift from Jane Hoey's estate, income is trending \$14,000 below budget. This is in part because we have continued to see declining building rental income and Sunday offering collections. In addition, we generated \$11,000 less income from fundraising events, as we have shifted our focus more exclusively towards the canvas partially in response to difficulties staffing these labor-intensive fundraising roles. These declines were offset somewhat by a \$5,000 Diversity Grant that was not budgeted for in FY14. On the Expense side, Building Operation expenses exceeded budget by \$12,000, as a result of the cold and snowy winter. Currently, the expectation is that in FY14 our funding need from the endowment (again excluding the Hoey gift) approximately \$152,000\* or 5.8% from the endowment, at the high end of our targeted sustainable level. In addition to this, we withdrew \$90,000 to pay the previously incurred bill for the stained glass window repair.

The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2015 (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015) is included in the following pages and shows an increase in both income and expenses over FY14, resulting in a projected 5.5% funding need from our endowment. Based on pledges received to date, we are estimating \$420,000 of pledge income for the upcoming year, which would be >11% growth vs. the prior fiscal year (for the 2nd year in a row). This includes additional pledge income received during the fiscal year, which historically has been difficult to predict accurately. We have eliminated fundraising events from the Budget and reduced Sunday offering collections, but included some grant income based on recent history. There will still be fundraising efforts but the income from these events will instead go towards stipends, scholarships and outreach.

On the cost side, the Budget assumes a ¾ time Interim Minister, no ministerial intern, with only nominal salary increases for staff. While we were able to include most of the items that we wanted to fund in the budget, there were three items that we were not able to fund this year based on pledge income falling short of our original aggressive pledge goal of \$440,000. First, we continue to be at the bottom end or in some cases below the *UUA Fair Compensation* guidelines for a congregation and metropolitan area of our size. Second, we were not able to fund the paid senior youth leader that had been requested by our RE Committee. Third, the next phase of Mark Ewert's sustainability consulting project (Mission and Visioning exercise) was not able to be funded. Our hope is that with a strong Canvass in FY16, we can attract a capable second minister while also addressing these other items.

Aside from these items, our biggest financial challenges remain the reduction of the annual draw on our endowment fund, and deferred capital projects for our church building. The reduction of the annual draw on our endowment fund to a previously targeted 4.5% will likely continue to be out of reach in the near term. The capital campaign previously targeted for this coming year, has also been deferred. That said, we derive some optimism from the fact that we were able to continue to grow our base of financial support during a ministerial transition period.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Ryan Kim, Treasurer*

\*FY14 funding need = \$152k = -\$12k Operating Deficit less \$100k Hoey Gift income less \$40k Building and Grounds Capital Projects



**BUDGET PROPOSAL FY15**  
**July 2014 - June 2015**

	FY 12	FY13	ESTIMATED YEAR END FY 14	FY 14	Proposed FY 15
	Actuals	Actuals		Budget	Budget
<b>CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT</b>					
Pledges	336,979	338,361	378,000	377,600	420,000
Sunday Offering	12,627	10,931	10,000	17,000	10,000
Activity Fees	3,140	3,700	2,000	3,000	3,000
Other Donations	10,356	5,954	106,000	3,000	3,000
<b>Total Program Support</b>	<b>363,102</b>	<b>358,946</b>	<b>496,000</b>	<b>400,600</b>	<b>436,000</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>					
Fund Raising Events	21,078	7	13,700	25,000	-
Building Use	79,815	14,935	14,000	17,000	15,000
Grants and Designated Income	14,996	5,423	5,000	-	5,000
Interest	83	37	25	50	50
<b>Total Other Support</b>	<b>115,972</b>	<b>20,402</b>	<b>32,725</b>	<b>42,050</b>	<b>20,050</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>479,074</b>	<b>379,348</b>	<b>528,725</b>	<b>442,650</b>	<b>456,050</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>Payroll Related Expenses</b>					
Salary expense	257,768	265,071	270,000	272,164	291,722
Fringe expense	69,961	71,373	85,000	82,902	89,100
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>327,729</b>	<b>336,444</b>	<b>355,000</b>	<b>355,066</b>	<b>380,822</b>
<b>Program Related Expenses</b>					
Denominational	19,416	19,500	21,000	23,000	23,000
Sunday Services - Music	9,615	3,461	6,500	6,500	6,500
Religious Exploration	5,745	6,218	6,900	6,900	7,400
Special / Committee Funding	10,221	10,675	10,000	12,750	4,200
Welcome Team	2,405	882	1,500	1,500	3,000
Teaching Parish (Intern)	12,000	6,000	9,000	9,000	-
Consultants	4,000	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>63,402</b>	<b>46,736</b>	<b>54,900</b>	<b>59,650</b>	<b>44,100</b>
<b>Functional Expenses:</b>					
Administration & Office	39,000	30,580	33,000	31,500	39,400
Building Operations	83,831	93,759	97,750	85,200	95,000
<b>Total Functional Expenses</b>	<b>122,831</b>	<b>124,339</b>	<b>130,750</b>	<b>116,700</b>	<b>134,400</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>513,962</b>	<b>507,518</b>	<b>540,650</b>	<b>531,416</b>	<b>559,322</b>
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(34,888)	-128,170	-11,925	-88,766	-103,272
Endowment Transfer - Operating	78,843	90,000	89,000	89,000	104,000
<b>Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>43,955</b>	<b>-38,170</b>	<b>77,075</b>	<b>234 0</b>	<b>728</b>
<b>B&amp;G Capital Projects</b>					
B&G Capital Projects	60,000 *	60,000 **	130,000 ***	40,000	40,000
Endowment Transfer - Capital	60,000	60,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Endowment Transfer - Other	-	-	90,000	-	-

\* FY12 B&G used additional reserve funds of \$10,007 for Tower Repair and Tree trimming

\*\* FY 13 B&G used additional reserve funds of \$21,158 for Tower Repair

\*\*\* FY14 B&G estimated use of additional reserve funds of \$15,030 for Tower Repair

**RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION**

Includes \$500 for RE Committee expenditures separate from DRE expenditures for program

**SPECIFIC COMMITTEE FUNDING**

	FY14	FY15
Auction	250	-
Canvass/Stewardship	1,000	-
Capital Campaign	2,500	-
Care Ministry	600	500
Communications	2,000	<i>now in Admin outside printing banners etc</i>
Community on Ministry	-	-
Congregational Life	250	-
Diversity	500	500
Flowers	500	<i>now in Admin used at Christmas time</i>
Historic Archives	200	200
Leadership Development	500	-
Parish Committee	3,000	500
Photo Directory	700	<i>now in Admin on-line directory</i>
Social Action	1,500	1,500
Stained Glass	250	-
Teaching Parish	9,000	-
Technology	4,000	<i>now in Admin computer maintenance</i>
Welcoming Team	3,000	<i>now in Program \$1,500 to hospitality</i>
Worship	<u>2,200</u>	<u>1,000</u> <i>for Guest Preachers</i>
<b>TOTALS</b>	31,950	4,200

First Parish in Brookline  
FY 15 Time and Salary Recommendations

POSTION	FY 14	UUA 2014	Full time	Percent	Recommend FY 15
		Mid-Size II Range		Full time FY 15	
Senior - Jim	65,128.00	76,150 - 121,900	86,838.00	75%	66,384.00
Second Minister		49,050 - 79,250	50,667.00	75%	38,000.00
Interim Minister 75%	22,700.00				
Ministerial Other (Soc Sec)	6,718.84	9,577.80 - 15,388	10,315.00	N/A	7,985.38
Director of Religious Ed	37,930.00	51,900 - 62,350	51,000.00	75%	38,250.00
Music Director	24,550.00	51,050 - 67,550	51,556.00	50%	25,778.00
Section Leaders	16,000.00	N/A	N/A	8hrs*4/10mo	16,000.00
Accompanists		N/A	N/A		
Parish Administrator	42,750.00	43,600 - 58,850	44,000.00	100%	44,000.00
Admin Assistant	15,719.00	28,400 - 38,400	36,920.00	18 hr/wk	16,146.00
Membership Coordinator	9,300.00	36,450 - 49,000	37,200.00	25%	9,300.00
Sexton	13,728.00	30,200 - 39,500	37,232.00	15hrs/wk	13,923.00
Custodian	14,040.00	30,200 - 39,500	24,960.00	18hrs/wk	12,355.20
Nursery	3,600.00	NA	NA	3hrs*2/10 mo	3,600.00
<b>Total Staff Wages</b>	<b>272,163.84</b>		<b>430,688.00</b>		<b>291,721.58</b>
Professional Expenses	13,682.00		24,770.90		15,561.94
Benefits	52,939.00	estimates	60,000.00		57,085.30
FICA & Worker's Comp	16,281.16	estimates	25,000.00		16,452.76
<b>Total Compensation / Expenses</b>	<b>355,066.00</b>		<b>540,458.90</b>		<b>380,821.58</b>

*Ministerial other is social security offset actually paid to Minister's and thus is part of their salary thru payroll service and needs to be represented here ... otherwise it's confusing as budget doesn't fall in line as actually tracked Previous years this was part of the FICA/Worker's comp line item*

**Two Pages of the UUA Compensation Guidelines were inserted here**

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## **WELCOMING COMMITTEE**

2013-2014

**Team Members:** Nora Collins and Kristen McIntire (co-chairs), Susan Caplan, Laura Hatfield, Kathryn Kirshner, Branch Moody, and Shane Montoya (staff)

**Our Mission:** To attract, invite, inspire, retain, and support newcomers; to encourage membership and foster a congregation-wide pro-newcomer spirit 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.

### **2013-2014 Goals**

1. To create a spirit of welcome and community which begins before the service, carries through it, and extends throughout the hospitality hour.
2. Be responsible for providing greeters and ushers for each Sunday worship service.
3. Facilitate, sponsor and promote Unitarian Universalist orientation sessions.
4. Work in collaboration with the Membership Coordinator to operate a robust visitor follow-up system, which includes, but is not limited to, asking newcomers to fill out Welcoming Cards, as they feel comfortable doing so.
5. Help the Membership Coordinator collect membership information and trends, and will examine it on a regular basis to spark new ideas for welcoming.
6. Review these trends on a regular basis to spark creative new ideas for welcoming.
7. Lead, by example, the welcoming of visitors to Sunday services by taking a genuine interest in the people we haven't yet met, by being aware that as a Welcoming Committee we may be their foothold in such a large and lively place.

### **Achievements**

- We welcomed 51 first-time visitors on Sunday mornings, collected contact information from them, and followed up with postcards, emails, and phone calls to newcomers. By May 31, 2013, 10 individuals will have signed the Membership Book.
- We printed personalizable cards for WC members to hand to visitors and facilitate continued contact.
- Our team co-hosted with Rev Jim four newcomer luncheons/breakfasts. At these popular events, attendees described their faith journeys and learned about the history of Unitarian Universalism and First Parish in Brookline. Some folks even returned for more than one event!
- We facilitated a series of Deeper Conversation events following worship services. These were designed as a quieter alternative to coffee hour, a space to connect deeply and share reactions to the morning's service..
- We raised the visibility of welcoming as a congregation-wide effort with a skit on opening Sunday (Sept 8, 2013). We have also worked with the Worship Committee on emphasizing in announcements the multiple ways that the congregation can practice radical hospitality and newcomers can engage.

## **Appreciation and Recognition**

We are grateful to Shane Montoya, Membership Coordinator, in assisting our committee by coordinating greeting schedules, facilitating meetings, collecting and updating newcomer information, and supporting all of us on Sunday mornings. Though we will miss Shane as he moves on to an internship, we are happy that our own Kristen McIntire will be taking over.

Special thanks to greeters who joined WC members in welcoming on Sunday mornings: Teresa Cooley, Grace Raczek-Hoffmann, Priscilla Brown, Val Gunning, Johanna Kepler, Sheila Hussey, and Jack Smith.

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

2013-2014

Committee members: Coleman Mark (co-chair), Karen Kepler (co-chair, emeritus), Lisa Underhill, Jamie Redgrave, Scott Ullrich, Charlotte Willett, Andrew Maryniuk. The ministerial team (Rev. Jim, Rev. Maria Cristina, and Sarah Napoline, intern) attend most meetings.

Meeting Schedule: The Committee holds regular monthly meetings, usually at 1:00 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. Special meetings are held as needed.

The Worship Committee continued the work it began two years ago to move its primary focus away from First Parish worship events occurring outside of Sunday morning and to re-establish its presence in and support of Sunday morning worship activities. These efforts included assisting the worship team on Sunday mornings by having Committee members present the Welcome and Announcements on a rotating basis, serve as readers during services and perform in multi-generational service skits. In addition, the Committee continued the feedback session on Sunday services with the ministerial team as a regular component of the Committee's monthly meetings. The Committee hopes to build on these efforts in the coming church years.

The Committee also helps produce the Summer Services. The Worship Committee organized and served as Worship Assistants for these services for the 2013 summer and is in the process of organizing them for summer 2014. The Committee's goals for 2014 are to continue to offer both lay-led and ministerial-led services, and to develop a better support system for members of the congregation that are interested in leading a summer service, most especially those who have not previously led services.

With respect to the worship celebrations that occur outside of Sunday morning worship (historically these have been Samhain, Winter Solstice, Seder, Tenebrae and Summer Solstice) the Committee took another step in the direction of these services being produced by the worship team or by lay-leaders, when there is interest.

Therefore, while the Worship Committee is no longer primarily responsible for organizing and producing these events, the committee actively discussed them at its meetings, and supported those events that were held. Results of these discussions are:

- Sarah Napoline led a small darkness ritual and Samhain service on November 1st.
- Sarah Napoline led a Winter Solstice service on December 22<sup>nd</sup> with the help of the Earth Based Traditions group
- Tenebrae was primarily organized by the second minister, Rev. Maria Cristina, with support and participation by members of the committee.
- We did not hold a church-wide Seder this year (following on a year of low expressed interest in 2012-2013), and instead encouraged the congregation to open their homes to First Parish folks if they were hosting Seders. Congregants organized this on their own.
- The Committee needs to receive expression of interest from the congregation in a summer solstice service order to go forward with this. This year it was incorporated into the calendar-adjacent Sunday service.



One major issue facing the Committee for the coming Church year is that we will be losing many (long-serving! Thank you!!) Committee members. They will be moving on to other committees and other ways to contribute to our community. We have only two committee members committed to return next year to a Committee that ought to have 6-9 members. We are hard at work on recruitment!