



**FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD  
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes January 11, 2016

The meeting started at 7:30 pm in the Brooks Room.

<b>Present</b>	Tom Wilson, Fifi Ball, Patty Popov, Gib Metcalf, Fred Van Deusen, and Carol Smith Michelle Fortier, RE Committee
<b>Discussions</b>	<p>We approved the November minutes. There was no meeting in December.</p> <p>1) We discussed the '2017 Budget and Pledge Income' document that Tom created after a preliminary budget discussion with the Standing Committee. The estimated cost of all requested increases to the budget over last year is \$224K. A select, 'Priority Intentions' list totaled \$70K+. It would require a 7.4% increase in pledges to achieve that additional income. One of the questions we grappled with was how much we could ask from the congregation, given what we know about past giving. We saw a 12% pledge increase in 2016 over 2015, but that included a single pledge of \$60K. While that pledge will be reduced gradually in subsequent years, there were multiple other factors that caused 2016 to increase that we can't expect will be repeated in 2017. The average change over the last seven years has been 3.7%, but that included a couple of years with decreases in pledges and years of leadership transition which could create anomalies in giving. So it's not necessarily representative. All were in general agreement that we probably shouldn't target as high as last years' 12% level as we plan for 2017 goals.</p> <p>2) Michelle Fortier attended the meeting to make a case for reducing RE fees in the 2017 budget. The request is to eliminate regular fees, while keeping retreat fees and holiday craft entry fees in the budget. This item had already been included in the 'Priority Intentions' list, which essentially met the RE Council's request as far as possible in this stage of the budget cycle. Some of the discussion points made in support of wanting to reduce the fees: 1) to support creating community between people who have kids and people who don't, 2) families may conclude that since they pay an RE fee, they don't need to pledge, or don't need to pledge as much as they otherwise might, 3) a request for RE fees at the \$100 or \$250 level to new families may be starting their 'contributions' to FP at a much lower level than if they'd simply been asked to pledge from the outset, 3) there are other activities at FP that don't require fees, so there's an arbitrary element to charging RE fees. Given ongoing budget discussions at the Standing Committee level it seems likely that the fees will be reduced this year, although it isn't yet confirmed.</p> <p>3) Gib and Fred led us through their charting and preliminary analysis of survey results for the Benchmarking Analysis. We received 11 surveys; a 34% response rate. They compared Concord to like churches on measures of per capita spending, budget size, and pledge amounts, all relative to family income. They looked at these measures for church members, attendees at Sunday services, and numbers of people who'd pledged. Then did a comparison with subsets of MA churches and large churches. Additionally, there was a compilation of the narrative survey response that provided extensive anecdotal data. The data is so rich that we</p>



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	agreed it was premature to draw conclusions from the preliminary data and that more analysis and culling data is warranted before we're ready to present any findings.
<b>Decisions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Tom, Fifi, Patty and Carol agreed to have a meeting to work on the policy change project.</li><li>b. We agreed to defer drawing conclusions from the preliminary benchmarking data and that Gib and Fred would make another round of analysis for next month.</li></ol>
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Gib and Fred</b> take a next pass at the benchmarking study analytics.</li><li>• <b>Tom, Patty, Fifi, and Carol</b> will meet about the finance policies.</li></ul>
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• February 8, 7:30 pm</li></ul>

The meeting was adjourned around 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Smith