

## First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

Meeting Date: 7/14/2020

### Meeting Attendees:

Fifi Ball	Manager of Operations	Y
Jane Barnes	Treasurer	Y
Jeff Brainard	Standing Committee Member	Y
Rev Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Laurel Doggett	Clerk	Y
James Hawks	Standing Committee Member	Y
Peter Nobile	Chair	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	N
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	Y
Liz Rust	Vice Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Kate Svreck	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y

PLEASE NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY (VIA ZOOM)

Howard lit a chalice and shared a quote by Dr. Cornel West, taken from the 2015 Ware Lecture and included in the UUA's *Widening Our Circles* Report.

### Introductions and Meeting Overview

Peter Nobile welcomed new members, who made introductions, and reviewed the meeting format which will be to discuss matters of business first, followed by more strategic and long-term thinking and reflection.

### Approval of Minutes

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the June 2020 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

### Senior Minister's Report:

Howard answered questions regarding the Social Action Council's (SAC) unusual move of a unilateral resignation of all its members. Howard recapped the recent history of staff changes, and the due diligence of attempting to improve the SAC's effectiveness. However, the SAC members felt that their direction and purpose was unclear. They believe their resignation will give Social Action Manager Adrienne Betancourt more space to evaluate needs and determine an operational structure that will best support social action initiatives and programs at First Parish.

Howard responded to queries regarding the church's two Zoom technicians, who were successfully onboarded. Howard mentioned they were both a quick study, easy to work with, and provided important support. While they were originally hired for the summer only, they will continue for the upcoming year.

## First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

Regarding additional recent hires, Howard mentioned that Bruce Davidson is the new Facilities Manager to start September 1. Brendan Ferrari has also joined as the new Children's Choir Director.

Howard responded to questions regarding the Church's fall reopening plans. At the moment no large gatherings or full services are planned for the year ahead. Small groups or one-to-one meetings may be a possibility. There is slightly more traffic in the building now. Offices will be open and will follow important safety protocols.

Howard reviewed his proposed Themes for the next church year, focusing on UU Roots. He also reminded us that he will be off for the month of August.

### **Director of Operations' report:**

Fifi Ball answered questions regarding the current budget update. Fifi felt confident that June would end in black despite the significant amount of payroll that typically occurs during June. While expenses will be up in June, there are resources available to cover these anticipated costs.

Jane Barnes mentioned that she had been approached by several parishioners after the Annual Meeting regarding the Church's application to the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP). A few members commented that the Church had enough financial resources to cover payroll, and wondered if the PPP was really necessary.

We discussed the fact that First Parish followed the recommendation of the UUA, which encouraged all churches to apply for the loan. The Plan was designed to help meet payroll during COVID-19 and, at the time of application, pledges were down at First Parish. The \$118,000 application request was below the qualifying amount we could have applied for, and it will be used strictly for FP payroll. While technically a loan, if 100% of the monies are used to cover payroll, the loan will eventually be forgiven. Some employees who could not physically work at the Church during COVID-19 shutdown did continue to receive compensation.

The loan money has been placed in the payroll account. Times still remain uncertain and there was consensus that the PPP, in the short-term, has been helpful. Messaging around PPP and its use should be consistent.

There was a brief discussion about the semi-annual auction and whether there will be a willingness for some form of this to happen.

### **Liaison and Subcommittee discussion, other business items**

#### **a. Subcommittees:**

- **Finance:** Last year, Jane, Tom and Fifi served as the Finance subcommittee. It was noted that the entire budget responsibility falls on Howard and Fifi. Moving forward, the SC will explore ways of alleviating the entire scope of budget responsibility on staff. Jane mentioned that the subcommittee had floundered a bit due to lack of clear projects and focus. After some brainstorming on new possibilities, this particular subcommittee feels revitalized.

## First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

- **Governance:** Last year, Liz, Susan, and Tom comprised this subcommittee. Liz and Susan think this subcommittee should be paused until the SC can formulate clear governance goals or projects. There was discussion around the need to look at the Church's governance structure and review what is working and what is not.
- **Ministerial Support:** This subcommittee will be made up of Jeff, Susan, and Peter who will continue to work toward building a more trusting and honest relationship between the SC and the Senior Minister. The next meeting with Howard will be in September. A charter for this group has not yet been developed.

### **b. Liaisons: ELT, Belonging Team, Denominational Affairs, Wright Tavern Task Force**

At next month's meeting, SC liaison assignments will be made for open positions, specifically for the Nominating Committee, the Environmental Leadership Team, Denominational Affairs, the Wright Tavern Task Force, and Membership Committee. We may also need liaison to the Belonging Team. Peter suggested that it would be beneficial to have one SC member volunteer to be thoroughly familiar with our by-laws and policies to help guide the SC in its deliberations and decisions.

- **Belonging Team** – Liz is currently serving as the liaison.
- **Wright Tavern Task Force** – Trustees are working on five-year plan. Jane is on this task force and will serve as SC liaison.
- **Nominating Committee** - Kate has been the liaison and recommended that we have another SC member involved to understand the nomination process.
- **Pastoral Care** – Peter served last year.

### **Members' reports: What are we hearing? Long range planning, strategic thinking, visioning**

It was noted that parishioners appreciated the Pastoral Care newsletter and Liz Weber has note cards for use that people can pick up at the Church office.

There was discussion about the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change that was discussed widely at this year's General Assembly (GA), which analyzes the structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within the UUA and makes concreate recommendations to all congregations. The GA delegation's report has been shared this evening with the SC.

It was mentioned that not all FP members can use ZOOM or have the technological abilities to feel connected to a church that has gone virtual. Hard copies of FP weekly are currently being sent to about 10 people, and are available to anyone else upon request. Other mechanisms such as note cards might be helpful in maintaining connection with those not on ZOOM. It was recommended that someone determine who at FP could benefit from low-tech communications and to reach out to those people ASAP.

## First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

There was discussion about creating a monthly message from the SC to the congregation, possibly some sort of web blog, and reviving the tradition of SC members staffing the now virtual coffee hours. Jeff will test out such a process this coming Sunday and will generate a list of SC assignments. Summer will be a good time to test this out. The coffee hour SC ZOOM host will be required to attend a ZOOM tech-check at 9:00 AM on Sunday regarding general housekeeping.

Regarding long-range planning and goals for the year, it was noted that typically Howard compiles his goals first in collaboration with the SC, and then the SC defines its own goals which will be shared at our October retreat.

### **Review the four current SC strategic goals, gauge progress to date**

1. Move first Parish towards a vision inspired by our Year of Reflection and Visioning findings – the most visible result has been the Belonging Team task force.
2. Strengthen and better define our shared leadership model with Howard – the MSG has been revitalized and will continue to build on last year's work.
3. Review policies and improve governance – the Governance subcommittee reviewed and modified the membership policy this past year.
4. Become a more reflective body – part of this work is our emphasis on visioning and planning as the second part of each SC meeting.

### **Upcoming projects, reports and activities requiring SC sponsorship**

Peter briefed the group on the following upcoming projects:

- **5 Pillar reports:** (Pillars: Pastoral Care, RE, Social Action, Music & Worship, and Administration) Two times per year that there will be a check in with each group through the lens of these 5 pillars.
- **Belonging team:** A final report and recommendations coming in October
- **ELT Greening the Campus task force formation:** A charter is being created which the SC will review.
- **Report from GA delegation, Widening Our Circles Report.** There was some discussion on best ways to support Sarah Burns and getting this report on our website this fall.
- **UU the Vote, Racial Justice Group, Immigration Justice Task Force (IJTF) and Jade Sylvan,** incoming intern. SC to consider ways in supporting these groups and Jade.

### **Final items**

- The Standing Committee overall calendar for 2020-21 was reviewed and will be updated each month.

## First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

- A celebration of Doug Baker will be held at the end of August with a service and a car parade. The SC will consider other ways to honor Doug's long and faithful service to First Parish.
- Adrienne Betancourt recently lost her mother. It was decided that the SC will send her flowers. Susan and Peter will take up a collection.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was closed at 8:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurel Doggett, Clerk