

First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

Meeting December 14, 2021

Fifi Ball	Manager of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Jim Hawks	Standing Committee Member	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Clerk	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Standing Committee Member	Y
Caroline Washburn Minkin	Standing Committee Member	Y
Heather Packard	Treasurer	Y
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	N
Liz Rust	Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Liz Weber	Pastoral Care Minister	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Howard started with a reading, *A Prophetic Vision*, by Rev. Dana Greeley.

Minister's Report

- Interviews for Social Action Manager position are concluded and one candidate looks particularly promising. Howard is checking references.
- The Black Lives Matter banner on display in front of the church was stolen last weekend. A new banner is already up, and a backup banner has been ordered.

Pastoral Care Minister's Report

- The pastoral workload is generally heavy, though it does wax and wane over time.
- The pastoral care lay ministers are doing good work, despite the difficulties and challenges of the Pandemic.
- The following support groups are active and open to new members: Cancer Support Group, Caretaker Support Group and Parent Support Group.
- Lillian Andrews, Liz Rust and Liz Weber offered a "Welcome/Re-Welcome" class in November. 10 people participated, and the feedback was positive. The class consisted of 3 sessions over Zoom. Lillian, Liz and Liz intend to offer another session in the spring.

Director of Operations Report

- Housing Allowances. There is a federal law that exempts ministers from having to pay taxes related to their housing. Every December, the Standing Committee is called upon to approve the housing allowances under this federal law.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve housing allowances for Howard Dana in the amount of \$34,300, Amy Freedman in the amount of \$26,296 and Liz Weber in the amount of \$9,600.

- Social Action Donation. The church received a donation of \$1,000 from a member for the “Social Action Committee.” The Standing Committee recommended that the donation be deposited in the SAC Reserve fund.
- Church-Owned Art and Furniture. The Concord Museum is interested in borrowing and displaying a table and 2 paintings that are currently hanging in the Parish Hall (depicting Concord Women Sewing). The table is worth approximately \$75,000 and the paintings are worth approximately \$18,000 & \$24,000. Fifi asked the Standing Committee whether the church should loan these items to the Concord Museum. The benefit to doing so is that these items are valuable and would be less likely to be stolen or damaged if located in the Concord Museum. Gib suggested that if we do loan these items, we should make copies of the paintings so that they can continue to be displayed in the Parish Hall. Fifi will look into the logistics of making reproductions of the paintings. The SC will vote on this matter in January.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the November, 2021 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

Standing Committee Operations

- Mechanical Engineering Contract. Liz signed the mechanical engineering contract for the Greening the Campus project effort.
- Policy Review.
 - Finance Policy. The Committee reviewed the Finance Policies, last approved by the Standing Committee on December 9, 2018. The Committee discussed how best to get the Congregation’s input on First Parish’s annual goals and priorities to be reflected in the budget. Caroline suggested raising this topic to the various committee chairs at the next All Chairs Committee meeting. Liz mentioned that we will likely have a very tight budget this year without much room for new line items. We should be forthright about the situation, and use it as an opportunity to foster engagement and awareness. Mike reiterated the importance of asking the Congregation what they think and want regarding the budget.
 - Sabbatical Policy. Howard is currently the only minister accruing sabbatical leave. He currently has approximately 3 months of accrued time.
- Communication and Belonging Subcommittee (Goal 2 Subcommittee).

- Data Trends. Liz shared data about First Parish households over time. Caroline mentioned that attendance actually increased during the pandemic because people were grateful to have something comforting and familiar to do on Sunday morning, and people from far away were able to attend.
- Congregational Review and Survey Process. CC and Susan described the subcommittee's plans for the next 5-year congregational review and survey program. The last survey was done in 2018. The next survey will take place during the 2022-23 church year, which will be a year of transition and rebuilding. The survey will ask people how they are feeling about FP leadership, assess priorities and consider whether FP's current mission statement still serves us well.
- Meck Groot, UUA Congregational Consultant. Liz and Howard have met a few times with Meck Groot to get advice about engaging with the congregation, right-sizing the church, dealing with the effects of the pandemic on the congregation, etc. Meck will visit the Standing Committee in January, and will facilitate meetings of the congregation in the winter/spring.