

**First Parish in Concord  
Standing Committee Meeting  
December 12, 2023**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Lisa Bennett	Standing Committee Member	Y
Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Senior Minister (Interim)	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Clerk	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Chair	Y
Caroline Washburn Minkin	Standing Committee Member	Y
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	Y
Leah Russell	Treasurer	Y
Liz Rust	Standing Committee Member	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Dave Elwood	Chair, Pledge Campaign	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON AT FIRST PARISH AND VIA ZOOM.

Jennifer Izzo offered opening words.

Everyone checked in about how they are doing. Gib asked how everyone is feeling about their role on the Standing Committee. Discussion ensued.

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS REPORT**

- Liz Rust reported that the Auction raised approximately \$35,000.
- Fifi Ball reported that so far this year we have had \$44,200 additional expenses that were not anticipated. These expenses were taken out of our surplus fund account, which began the year at approximately \$140,000.
- Approximately \$16,000 in late pledges have come in recently.

**INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER REPORT**

- Liz Weber is still on medical leave. The other staff members have been picking up the slack, which has been stressful. Staff has been stretched even thinner recently because our Assistant Director of Religious Education, Dawn Van Patten, has been out sick/working part time due to Covid. Rev. Amy Freedman has been covering Pastoral Care duties, in addition to her Religious Education duties. Rev. Carrier-Ladd reported that Liz will not be ready to come back to FP on January 2 as expected, due to continuing health concerns. Amy Freedman does not wish to continue to cover Pastoral Care duties in the new year. Fortunately, Rev. Paul Langston-Daley, Minister of Social Action, is willing to increase his hours to cover pastoral care through the month of January.
  - o Seth asked the SC to approve up to \$1,500 to cover the additional cost of increasing Rev. Paul Langston-Daley's hours from 33 hours to 40 hours during the month of January, 2024, so that he can address pastoral care concerns.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve the expenditure of up to \$1,500 to cover increases hours for Rev. Paul Langston-Daley during the month of January, 2024.

- Liz Rust shared an update about what the FP Membership Committee has been doing. (The Membership Committee is not part of the SC.) They are working with Catherine Hill to update the FP website to make it more welcoming. They continue to staff the welcome table in the Parish Hall after services, and meet with newcomers as they come in. Heather Packard had planned to set up a table during the tree lighting in Concord Center to promote FP and Religious Exploration, but the event was rained out. Susan See and Lillian Anderson will offer a new Pathway to Belonging class this winter. Finally, as a follow up to Peter Bowden's service, some people are interested in starting an outreach effort.
- Rev. Carrier-Ladd reported that heat in the church building has not been working properly. Heat is now restored in the chapel and elsewhere, but still isn't working in the sanctuary. We are waiting on the repair company to custom-build a needed part for the heating system. In the meantime, we are renting electric heaters to heat the sanctuary. We don't yet know how much money this repair will cost.
- The anticipated transition to the Breeze church management software did not work out. They were not able to migrate our data in a way that would enable us to report on financials from prior years.
- The staff transitioned their email host from Microsoft 365 to Google.
- Worship.
  - o Last Sunday was the last in a series of four services focused on examining the meaning of our Benediction. We will wait to see if the Congregation wishes to make changes to the Benediction
  - o Our Pop-up Pageant, Blue Christmas vespers, and Christmas Eve services are planned and ready to go.
  - o Seth is looking for people to serve as readers for the 8:00pm Christmas Eve service.
  - o Mary Margaret Earl from the UU Urban Ministry will lead our worship service on January 7.
- Rev. Paul Langston-Daley will lead a workshop on managing conflict on Saturday, January 27. It would be good to have as many church leaders present as possible.

- The technology upgrade continues to be a challenge. Shanahan Sound's specifications for the computer equipment continues to evolve. Our new Lead AV Tech, David Wisniewski, has suggested a hardware solution to address the remaining concerns in place of the computer solution that Shanahan Sound has proposed, but is struggling to implement.
- The project to install railings on the pulpit is proceeding. There will likely be a proposal for the SC to vote on at the next meeting. This project is not reflected in the budget. The additional funds could come from surplus cash or the building fund, or we could do a fundraiser.
- Pledge Campaign.
  - o The pledge committee is moving forward. The theme will be "New Beginnings." Dave Elwood joined the meeting on behalf of the Pledge Campaign.
  - o The pledge committee asked the SC to set the goal of how much money should be raised. The SC suggested that the goal should equal the amount of our current budget (adjusted for inflation), plus additional amounts to cover cost of living raises for staff and the deficit. No new projects are being proposed during this time of transition. Fifi will estimate the fundraising goal based upon those instructions.

## **SC OPERATIONS**

- Subcommittee on Community and Connection.
  - o CC, Lisa and Susan reported on what the Community and Connection subcommittee has been working on this church year. Susan started the report by summarizing what the subcommittee has done in the past. They focused on coordinating the SC's outreach to the congregation in order to foster connection. Last year, almost all of their work involved coordinating the outreach to form the transition team and the senior minister search team.
  - o They feel that the congregation needs more ways for people to feel connected. One idea is for the subcommittee to sponsor a social event every month. The subcommittee would play the role of coordinator, asking people in different congregational groups to take turns organizing an event.
  - o They could also do a congregational survey of what is needed and/or missing in terms of fellowship opportunities, and/or reach out to the congregation for input on the SC's Ends Statements.
  - o A question was raised about how the Welcoming and Membership Group differs from the SC Subcommittee on Community and Connection. Liz Rust answered that the Welcoming and Membership Group focuses on welcoming people into the congregation and doing outreach to bring new people in. They don't plan events. In contrast, the SC Subcommittee's role is focused on helping members already in the church to foster a greater sense of community and connection.
  - o The SC agreed that we need more time to consider what the role of the Community and Connection subcommittee should be. The conversation will be resumed at the next SC meeting.
- Meeting Minutes. Additional edits are needed to the November SC meeting minutes. The SC will vote on the revised minutes for November at its January meeting.
- Nominating Committee. Jim and CC believe that the Nominating Committee can function with only five members. CC will speak with the Nominating Committee to determine whether they agree.

The SC meeting was adjourned at 8:38pm.