

**First Parish in Concord
Standing Committee Meeting
February 8, 2022**

Fifi Ball	Manager of Operations	N
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
Tim Whitney	Member of Congregation, Representing 2022 Pledge Campaign	Y
Dian Pekin	Member of Congregation	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Howard started the meeting by reading a poem, “Running Across the Pews,” by Jeff Gundy

BOARD OPERATIONS

Minister’s Report

- Gib asked if people are returning to the sanctuary. Howard answered that they are not. In fact, we are seeing a decline in in-person attendance. The majority of people are watching the church services online.
- Caroline asked about the Congregational Life group and if they are doing anything to help encourage people to attend and connect. Howard answered that they have a table each week and greet new members, etc. In addition, there is a Membership Committee that could be reinvigorated.
- Some new families have joined the church during the pandemic.
- When we registered with the UUA this year, we showed a significant drop of membership – approximately 30 people. It is normal for the church to have attrition every year, but generally people leaving due to natural reasons are replaced with new members. However, during the pandemic, we haven’t seen many new members.
- Heather asked if First Parish “friends” (as opposed to members) are regular pledgers. Howard confirmed that friends do tend to pledge. Many people don’t make a distinction between being a friend or a member of the church. The only difference is that non-members can’t be committee chairs, can’t serve on the Standing Committee, and can’t vote at the annual meeting.
- Howard announced that First Parish has been given a gift of \$1,000,000 from Ian and Liesel Simmons.

Nominating Committee Update

- The Nominating Committee is meeting later this week. They would like to know what kinds of skills would be helpful for the SC.
- Gib suggested that we need people who are organized, thoughtful, knowledgeable about and invested in First Parish, personable and engaged, good team players, curious, have time to commit to the SC, and have good meeting skills. Liz wants to find people who are interested in the church's wellbeing and figuring out its strategic direction. Caroline added that it's important that the SC represents the people attending church. We don't necessarily need individuals who have historical knowledge about the church; it's more important that they have the interest and ability to engage with people. Mike wondered about finding minority representation. Virginia wants to look for people with cross cutting interests in the church to make sure that we have the range of program ministries covered.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the January, 2022 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

GOAL: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, PLEDGE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

2022 Pledge Campaign Update

- Tim Whitney gave an update on this year's pledge campaign. There are 6 testimonials planned from late February to early April, 2022, including 2 teenagers. The first letter for the campaign went out to members and friends this month. The Sustainer's Event will be on Saturday, March 5, 2022.
- The committee is encouraging people to increase their pledges. If they do, they will be entered into a raffle. Heather is soliciting ideas for raffle prizes (e.g., vacation house over a weekend, special dinner, etc.).
- "Celebrating Our Connections" is the tagline for this year's campaign.
- The group discussed that peer-to-peer contact is the best way to garner donations. Howard is offering a training session on February 10th for people who have volunteered to reach out to potential donors to make connections.

Museum Loan of First Parish Property

- At the SC's meeting in December, 2021, the SC discussed a proposal to loan the following items to the Concord Museum:
 - 2 paintings by Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts: (1) "Concord Women Sewing For the War Sufferers in the Vestry of the First Parish Meeting House," appraised at \$18,000; and (2) "Concord Women Sewing For the Belgium Refugees," appraised at \$24,000.
 - A Queen Anne Maple & Cherry Table, appraised at \$75,000.

- The SC is interested in loaning these items to the Concord Museum where they will be insured and safer.
- In addition, the Concord Art Association, across the street, would like to borrow the 2 paintings (from the Concord Museum) for an exhibit of Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts paintings, scheduled to run from October-December, 2022. If this second loan is approved there will be a separate contract covering details like insurance, timing, transportation, care/damage, etc.
- Currently, reproductions of the paintings are being made. Bruce is taking the paintings to a local frame shop. As soon as they are framed, Bruce will put the reproductions on display in the Parish Hall.
- Dian Pekin expressed her perspective on the proposed loan. She is in favor of removing the items from First Parish to make sure the paintings are safe and protected, but she wants to make sure that the Concord Museum can properly protect the paintings, particularly if the artwork is included in travelling exhibits. She also wondered how the paintings came into First Parish's possession, and whether there were conditions placed upon the gift or purchase of these paintings that should be honored.
- The SC discussed that the contract between First Parish and Museum must be clear that First Parish retains ownership of the items, and that the Museum must take adequate measures to keep the items safe.
- The SC will vote on whether to approve the loan to the Concord Museum (and Concord Art Association) at a later date.

GOAL: COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION

First Parish Retreat with Meck Groot

- A retreat is planned on February 26, 9:00am-noon on Zoom, to be led by Meck Groot (Congregational Consultant of the UUA). The retreat is called "Leadership in Shifting Times, Transitioning to a New Future."
- Howard, Liz, Susan and CC have been working with Meck to plan the retreat. The announcement has been published via FPWeekly, and people have already signed up.
- Susan suggested that the announcement be sent to the RE families, as well. CC will contact Amy.

Save the Date May 14, 2022: First Parish Spring Celebration

- The First Parish Spring Celebration is scheduled for May 14, 2022.

GOAL: GOVERNANCE

- Virginia and Mike shared what they learned from conversations with the Minister of West Shore UU Church outside of Cleveland, Ohio. West Shore is going through a similar transition as First Parish. Their membership has been declining – they currently have about 500 members. Their previous organizational structure was not sustainable. The Minister and the Board of Trustees spent a year developing a new governance model.
- Virginia shared a graphical representation of West Shore church's new organizational structure, based around program councils.