

**First Parish in Concord  
Standing Committee Meeting  
December 13, 2022**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Senior Minister (Interim)	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	Y
Liz Rust	Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Rev. Liz Weber	Minister for Congregational Care	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM.

Jennifer Izzo read *A Winter Solstice Blessing*. Everyone checked in about how their lives are going and how they are feeling.

**Minister's Report and Update**

- Seth's family has been struggling with illness for the past month or more, including a bout with Covid. As a result, Seth has temporarily fallen behind with church emails.
- Recent worship services have been received well. Seth is aware that services have been running long, and the staff is working on shortening them. For example, rather than taking time to offer Invitations during the service, the weekly newsletter, *Sunday News*, will be reintroduced to cover that content.
- Seth and the staff are experimenting with different formats for worship, including re-ordering when various elements occur during the service.
- Christmas Eve Services will be at 7:00pm and 9:00pm. Christmas Day service will be an informal service in the chapel, led by Liz Weber and Beth Norton. On New Year's Day, a guest speaker will provide the sermon.
- Worship
  - Next Sunday there will be a pickup Christmas Pageant for all generations.
  - On January 15, the Covenant process will kick off.

- Over the course of 2 Sundays in February, CB Beal will be a guest speaker during FP's worship services, talking on the topic of Preemptive Radical Inclusion.
- March 5 will be Celebration Sunday, which kicks off the Stewardship campaign.
- Several members of the staff have been significantly ill. Beth is still recovering from Covid. Paul had surgery for a tear in his rotator cuff.
- There will be an all-congregational retreat on Saturday, February 11, led by the Covenant Team.
- On Saturday, March 11, CB Beal will offer a workshop on Preemptive Radical Inclusion.
- The Transition Team is moving forward. The Release Ritual was well attended, with a lot of quality sharing of feelings. The Transition Team will be preparing a report about what they heard during the Release Ritual. The report will be shared with the congregation.
- Two Sanctuary Modernization Town Halls were held last month. We are working on a plan to upgrade the technology in the sanctuary.
- Seth had a meeting with the Stewardship Committee, in preparation of the coming Stewardship Campaign.
- The FP staff attended a large congregation retreat. They also had a staff retreat in November, at which they created a staff covenant.
- Seth and the staff are experimenting with a new way to organize *FP Weekly*. In addition to the usual announcements and invitations, each week of the month will feature specific themes with consistent columns. The first week in the month will be focused on Governance and Worship. Week 2 will focus on Religious Education. Week 3 will be Congregational Life. Week 4 will be Social Action. Week 5 will be focused on music and worship arts.
- FP is in the process of updating its administrative management software.
- Seth announced a new Fundraising Policy. The policy states that no one may fundraise at First Parish without getting permission from the Senior Minister and being sponsored by a FP committee or program.

#### **Update from the Minister for Congregational Care**

- Small group ministries are going well.
- The Blue Holiday worship session was small, but meaningful.

- Liz held a New to UU class in November, with 9 participants attending. Several people now wish to sign the FP Membership Book.
- Liz is heading up the Covenanting Process with CC, and is looking forward to the process.
- Liz went to a Minister's Retreat in North Carolina, and is grateful that FP supports these opportunities for rest and renewal and connection with the UU Denomination.

### SC Operations

- Meeting Minutes Approval

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the November 9, 2022 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, as amended, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

### Director of Operations

- Fifi asked the SC to approve a \$1,000 donation that was specifically given for the Social Action Committee.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the \$1,000 donation for the Social Action Committee.

- The gap between the pledge income and the budget for this year has shrunk. As of today, we have \$969,823 in actual pledges, which is only \$177 less than budgeted. Most of these additional pledges came in via the Close the Gap campaign. The additional amounts were from recent new pledges.

### Governance Subcommittee Update

- The subcommittee presented a summary of what it believes to be the key governance problems that need to be addressed by FP, and sought discussion and consensus from the rest of the SC. The subcommittee is grounding this year's work upon the idea that we should focus on improving our current system, rather than trying to develop a completely new system.
- The key problems identified by the subcommittee are:
  1. Lack of clarity about roles, responsibilities, relationships and decision making authority among Senior Minister, Staff, Standing Committee and other committees.
  2. Lack of clarity about Standing Committee operations.
  3. Lack of consistent channel of communications (2-way) with the congregation.
  4. Ambivalence about members of the congregation taking on leadership roles
- The next step is for the Subcommittee to brainstorm potential solutions to the problems, and to present those ideas to the larger SC in February.

### **Recruitment of Senior Minister Search Team**

- The Belonging and Communications subcommittee presented a framework for how to recruit the search team for the next senior minister. The goal is to present for approval the proposed search team members to the Annual Congregational Meeting on June 11, 2023.
- FP will follow the UUA's Process for recruitment of a senior minister search team, as follows:
  - Meet with past members of the previous board who selected the search committee the last time we searched for a senior minister.
  - February: Send letters to each person in the congregation describing the process for recruitment of the search committee.
  - March: Make calls to everybody in the congregation to solicit ideas for who should serve on the search committee.
  - April: Analyze the results and put together a balanced slate.
  - June: Present the proposed members of the recruitment search team to the congregation to vote at the Annual Meeting.
- Gib suggested that the SC meet with members of the search committee, as well as members of the board that selected the search committee. The point of this meeting would be to learn anything search committee members might convey that could inform our process in communicating with the congregation about the search process and/or in selecting the slate. The SC thought that this would be a good idea.

### **FP Covenant Strategy Plan**

- Liz Weber and CC are partnering with the Commission on Institution Change (COIC) and Congregational Life Committee (CLC) regarding the development of a First Parish covenant. The goal of the Covenant is to articulate how we want to be together in community. The Covenant will be presented to the Congregation for a vote at the annual meeting in June of 2023.
- The process of developing a covenant is very important in itself because it helps to change the organizational culture.
- Individuals to serve on the committee to develop the Covenanting Strategy are now being identified. The first meeting of the committee will be in January.