

**First Parish in Concord
Standing Committee Meeting
March 14, 2023**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	N
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	N
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
Ken Reeves	Representative of Commission on Institutional Change	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM.

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd offered a reading from *Sources of Our Faith*.

The SC acknowledged and confirmed the Standing Committee Covenant. We covenant to:

- Listen to each other with enough focus and space to receive what is shared
- Assume best intentions
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate
- Welcome questions and different perspectives
- Make space and take space so that everyone's voices can be heard
- Lead collaboratively
- Take the necessary time for the work without rushing into decisions
- Show up prepared to do the work
- Speak with one voice about decisions
- Trust each other's wisdom

- Communicate directly with each other

Everyone checked in about how they are doing.

Ken Reeves – COIC’s Proposed First Parish Apology for Slavery and Colonization

- Ken Reeves returned to the SC for a second time as a representative of the Commission on Institutional Change (COIC) to discuss the draft Apology for Slavery and Colonization. The Apology acknowledges Concord’s and First Parish’s history of colonization and slavery, and acknowledges that this history continues in our country’s hierarchical structure.
- The group made changes to the Apology as a result of feedback received from impacted populations. For example, Ken spoke with the Concord Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, who suggested that the Apology be more action oriented. The Apology now includes an Action Plan.
- The COIC decided not to rush the vote on the Apology at this year’s annual meeting. They will wait until next year.
- Seth suggested that we need to get in relationship with a community of color on this initiative before moving forward (e.g., Robbins House, Concord Prison Outreach).

Interim Senior Minister’s Report and Update

- The bluegrass band, Southern Rail, will play at the service on March 26.
- We will hold a series of Easter services during Easter week in conjunction with First Parish in Lincoln.
- The Preemptive Radical Inclusion Workshop with CB Beale was a huge success. Seth is looking into inviting CB Beale back to focus on trans-gender issues.
- Seth and the Governance Subcommittee are taking steps to put together the 3-5 person Leadership Team (formerly referred to as the “Getting it Done” team). This group would assume responsibility for specified areas of church operations and ministry that is currently handled by the staff.
- We are working on selecting a designer for our sanctuary technology modernization effort.
- FP hired a half time office administrator under a 6-month contract. The announcement about her arrival will be made closer to the date when she actually arrives. A big portion of her job will be focused on communication and social media.
- Seth has a meeting scheduled with Peter Bowden next week to discuss Peter’s expertise in helping congregations improve outreach, communication and participation.

Update from the Minister for Congregational Care

- Liz W. reported that the small group ministries are going well. Some groups will be wrapping up soon, and some might extend to the end of the church year.
- Liz W. led a white allies caucus at the New Day Rising anti-racism conference.
- CC reported that the Covenant Committee is moving forward with a draft Covenant for FP. They condensed all of the congregational feedback into a one page document, and now have a draft covenant statement. The team will hold 4 town hall meetings in March: Wednesday, March 15, 1:00 pm online; Sunday, March 19, 11:30 am in person; Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 pm online; and Sunday, March 26, 11:30 am in person.

Transition Update

- Seth asked the Transition Team to lead the congregation in conversations about our identity, in light of our smaller size and budget deficit. There needs to be education about these trends and our new reality. The additional amount given by the Trustees this year does not decrease our budget deficit; it just gives us more time to deal with it.
- Liz R. shared charts showing data on FP’s membership, attendance, expenses and pledging trends.

FP membership has been in decline, and changes have to be made to respond to our current situation.

- The Transition team is holding 2 First Parish Life Stories events on Sunday, March 19 in person after the church service, and Monday, March 20 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

SC Operations

Director of Operations Report

- The pledge campaign is underway. 127 households have pledged so far, for a total of \$375,286 in pledges.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the January 10, 2023 and February 15, 2023 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, as amended, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

General Assembly/UUA

- Liz W. discussed the proposed Revision of Article II - Values and Covenant. The new Values and Covenant would replace the current 8 UU principles. These revisions are being considered by the entire UUA at the national level. The UUA will vote in June whether to continue the conversation and spend the following year studying the issue. The Standing Committee will sponsor a meeting for the congregation to discuss this topic and give input to FP's delegates to the UUA General Assembly. This meeting will probably take place in May.
- Liz W. reported that the UUA has nominated one individual to serve as the next president of the UUA - Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt.

Governance Subcommittee Update

- Seth and the staff drafted an Ends Statements for consideration by the Governance Subcommittee. The Governance Subcommittee will review and revise the Ends Statement, and will present it to the SC at the April SC meeting.

Senior Minister Search

- The list of people nominated to serve on the senior minister search team is almost finished and will be reviewed soon.

Upcoming FP Events

- 4/01: FP Talent Show
- 4/11: SC meeting: Review search committee applicants, review prelim budget/s
- 4/25: SC budget meeting
- 5/09: SC meeting: Confirm search committee ballot, review budget/s
- 5/20: Democracy Festival
- 5/22 (approx.): Budget approval deadline, warrant finalization
- 6/11: Annual Meeting
- 6/13: End of year SC meeting, Welcome new board members, elect next year positions, schedule summer/fall retreat

Executive Session

- The SC entered Executive Session.