

<b>Regular Attendees</b>		<b>Present</b>
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Standing Committee member	Y
Michelle Fortier	Treasurer	Y
Kristin Haddad	Chair	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	N
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Patty Popov	Standing Committee member	Y
Zach Roe	Social Action Coordinator	N
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	Y
Jo VonRue	Minister in Residence	N
<b>Guests</b>		
Darian Smith	Denominational Affairs	
Lillian Anderson	Denominational Affairs	
Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblom	Denominational Affairs	

Howard opened our meeting with *The work of Christmas* by Howard Thurman; Toby lit our chalice, and Kristin read our Standing Committee (SC) covenant.

Minor modifications were made to our December minutes, which were then approved unanimously.

**Goal Status Review**

The group reviewed our SC Goals and Measurements. Kate noted that we’ve launched Year for Reflection and Visioning (YfRaV) listening sessions. Kristin reported that Dave and Jo both joined the recent UUA Large Congregation conference call. Howard mentioned that several First Parishoners are attending a Three Kings event this evening at a church in Waltham. Lillian noted that she has helped assemble a group of UU Partner Church connections.

**Denominational Affairs Update**

Jim described the exceptional abilities and deep national connections of several First Parish leaders, and laid out a new view of how Denominational Affairs could function at First Parish. During these turbulent times, and in view of the radical institutional changes at the UUA, the Denominational Affairs group is committed to more deeply connecting First Parish to the UUA which itself is undergoing dramatic changes in leadership. Jim suggested that First Parish could serve as a “pivot point” for the denomination as we engage issues of white supremacy. At the same time, the demographic at First Parish is becoming older, wealthier and more white – unlike the demographics in Concord, the UUA and the nation in

general. Jim recommended that all of the SC read “Centering” by Mitra Rahnema, and applauded the fact that this month’s SAC share-the-plate money will go to Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism. He also implored with the SC to return to fully funding our commitment to the UUA, and for as many SC members as possible to attend General Assembly.

### **Jericho Road Statement**

Tom read a statement of encouragement to the Jericho Road group as follows:

*“The Standing Committee of First Parish in Concord wishes to extend our encouragement and support to your entire Jericho Road team for your efforts to rebuild and reinvent your mission. We greatly appreciate the work you have done, and look forward to working alongside you in making this a better world.”*

Howard recommended that the SC formally present this sentiment in a letter, which Kristin will draft. The committee formally endorsed the statement with a unanimous vote.

### **Chair’s Report**

Kristin reported a relatively quiet month.

### **Minister’s Report**

Howard’s report was received via email. Howard described a somewhat unpleasant meeting with the Social Action board, with continuing conflict over operations and procedures. The SC professed support for Howard’s efforts, and recommended as part of the healing process SC members might consider some one-on-one listening with SAC Board members to better acknowledge the hurt that some SAC members are feeling.

### **Director of Operations’ Report**

In addition to the report that was distributed by email, Fifi noted that because of tax and benefit calculations the staff bonuses cost slightly more than she had anticipated. Christmas Eve service was financially very successful, resulting in donations both to UU Urban Ministries and our partner church in Transylvania.

A motion was made to approve a change to the budget (line 4470) for an increase to Health Insurance costs of \$5,681. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

Michelle reported meeting in December with accountant George Tisdale regarding his proposal to perform a financial systems review this coming summer. The Financial Committee continues to review options. Steeple repair cost options are being analyzed.

### **Q&A from Liaison Document**

Kristin noted several interesting bits in the Liaison document. Jeff noted that he, Patty and John are starting the process regarding selection of the next SC chair. The goal is to reach consensus prior to the March meeting with a recommendation for the next SC chair.

### **Member’s reports**

- Lora reported hearing from a member whose family had a poor experience at the Christmas Eve service.
- Jim Sherblom reported great conversation and feedback during the two YfRaV sessions he facilitated, and offered kudos to the organizing team behind the scenes.
- Toby heard from two people that the Christmas Eve homily was the best they had heard in months, and that she also heard that people are happy with the “robust” RE program.
- Tom mentioned feeling good about the responsive and available Pastoral Care support.

**Year for Reflection and Visioning (YfRaV) update, ideals and goals**

Kate reported that the listening sessions have started and that the general tenor so far has been positive. Currently, 84 people have signed up for these sessions, and we should continue to encourage parishoners to sign up for a session. Kate noted that electronic scribing was easy to do, and that the scribe is responsible for setting up the room with chairs, materials, and so on. Toby has created a Google Docs folder for scribes’ notes.

Tom will be meeting with the survey team this coming Wednesday. Tom described ways of creating a survey that is less transactional in nature and focuses more on cultural indicators. Howard recommended keeping the survey short and to indicate how long it might take to fill out.

Some all-congregation social events are in the works, including a dinner in February and a Dance in March.

**Sabbatical Policy/Governance update**

A motion was made to approve The Sabbatical Policy, which included slight modifications. John has been the engine behind both this revised policy and SC governance updates.

A motion was made to approve Howard’s request for sabbatical from December 2018 through February 2019, during which time both Marion and Fifi will become full time. The motion was approved unanimously.

John has reviewed and commented on our SC policies and operating procedures, which Kristin then also reviewed, and which both found somewhat cumbersome and redundant. There are things in our policies that do not match up with what we actually do, but Kristin would like additional feedback before collapsing policies and procedures into one document. Kristin is recommending a roundtable discussion process to revise these procedures. The SC will be reviewing First Parish by-laws in 2019. The Membership Policy also needs review and is in slight conflict with the by-laws.

The group entered into executive session at 8:10PM. A motion was made to leave executive session and adjourn the larger meeting, was seconded and unanimously approved, and the meeting ended at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Peter Nobile  
Clerk