

First Parish in Concord

Draft Annual Report For Circulation
at the June 20, 2021 Annual Meeting

For the Year Ending June 30, 2021

Concord, Massachusetts

First Parish in Concord
Draft Annual Report for Circulation at the June 20, 2021 Annual Meeting
July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

Contents

Warrant for Annual Meeting	5
Guiding Principles and Annual Meeting Guidelines	6
Agenda for the Annual Meeting	8
Slate of Officers	9
Wright Tavern Presentation	12
General Assembly 2021 Delegates	15
Annual Report of the Senior Minister	16
Music Ministry Annual Report	20
Religious Education Program Annual Report	22
Facilities Manager Annual Report	25
Social Action Annual Report	29
SAC Program Reports	34
Committee Reports	48
Standing Committee Annual Report of the Chair	48
Bouillon Committee Annual Report	51
Conchords Annual Report	51
Congregational Life Committee Annual Report	51
Facilities Advisory and Research Group Annual Report	52
Ferry Beach Committee Annual Report	52
Flower Committee Annual Report	53
Greening the Campus Task Force Annual Report	54
Humanist Council Annual Report	55
Jewish Awareness Affinity Group Annual Report	56
Jhamtse Buddhist Group Annual Report	56
Moms Connection Group Annual Report	57
Pastoral Care Council Annual Report	58
Partner Congregation Committee & Our Transylvanian Partnership Community Annual Report	59
Photography Club Annual Report	63
Spanish-Speakers Affinity Group Annual Report	64
Steeple Painting Committee Annual Report	65

Transcendentalism Council Annual Report..... 66

Women’s A.M./P.M. Book Group 67

Women’s Parish Association 69

UUA Certification Numbers 74

Officers and Deacons 75

Staff..... 76

Bylaws..... 77

Ministers Since the Church was Founded..... 82

Warrant for Annual Meeting

WARRANT COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MIDDLESEX, SS.

To any one of the constables of the Town of Concord, GREETINGS:

You are hereby authorized and directed to notify and warn the qualified voters of FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD in said County of Middlesex, to meet on-line via Zoom meeting on SUNDAY, the 20th day of June 2021 at 11:00 o'clock in the morning, then and there to act and vote upon the following articles, to wit:

To hear and receive the reports of the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of Parish Donations, and other committee reports.

To choose all Parish officers for the ensuing year.

To ratify the UU General Assembly delegate slate.

To raise money for all parochial purposes, including the Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

To act upon any other business that may come before the meeting.

And you are hereby directed to serve this warrant by posting copies thereof, by you attested, in at least two public places in said Town, one of which shall be at the door of the Meeting House of said Parish, eight days, including two Sundays, before said twentieth day of June, and to have this warrant, with your doings thereon, at said meeting.

Witness our hands this 5th day of June in the year two thousand twenty-one:

(PLEASE NOTE: because we will be conducting this meeting online in accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, the Chair will sign on behalf of the entire Standing Committee, each of whom have provided electronic approval of this Warrant).

Peter Nobile, Chair, on behalf of:



Liz Rust, Vice Chair

Laurel Doggett, Clerk

Jane Barnes, Treasurer

Jeff Brainerd

Jim Hawks

CC King

Jim Reynolds

Susan See

Kate Svrcek

Virginia Taylor

Guiding Principles and Annual Meeting Guidelines

Guiding principles for our Annual Meeting

1. **Foster participation** on the Zoom platform. We'll offer access via computer or phone.
2. **Remain flexible.** We'll make some practical accommodations for a Zoom meeting, recognizing we are still pretty new to the platform and the capabilities may not exactly serve what we typically do in Annual Meeting
3. **Trust** in the participation. We won't have a formal registration of voters. We will trust that the participants in the meeting are qualified to cast a vote.
4. **Promote transparency.** We will make the meeting procedures and the supporting materials available at least one week in advance so members have time to review before the meeting.
5. **Communicate guidelines** for conduct and time allocations. Provide the rules of conduct given the accommodations we are making on account of Zoom and the guidelines for time allocated to presentations, clarifying questions, and deliberation.

Meeting Guidelines

1. Qualifying participants - We will trust that the participants in the meeting are qualified to cast a vote without formal registration. We are investigating if we can download the list of attendees from the Zoom meeting.
2. Member Instructions
 - Access to materials - access to materials will be available from the First Parish website in advance of the meeting. Access will be announced in First Parish Weekly.
 - Access to meeting - Information on how to access the Annual Meeting will be published in the First Parish Weekly email.
 - Clarifying questions in advance - You may contact a presenter in advance of the meeting if you have a clarifying question on the materials provided. Alternatively, you may send clarifying questions to Kristin Moore, the meeting moderator, who will share clarifying questions with the meeting and to the presenter for follow-up during the annual meeting. Both contacts will be available from the advance meeting material.
3. Zoom rules of conduct
 - Members will be muted until recognized by the Moderator.
 - To be recognized by the Moderator - Use the "raise hand" feature in Zoom to request to be recognized by the Moderator. Effort will be made to recognize all speakers within a reasonable timeframe. When you are recognized, you will unmuted and optionally you can display your video
 - When recognized, be succinct. Limit your comments to the matter under consideration. The general guidelines for verbal contributions is no more than two minutes.
 - Clarifying questions in the meeting - Moderator recognizes the first question from live attendees and then alternates between pre-submitted questions, chat questions and verbal questions. Moderator "recognizes" (reads) chat and pre-submitted questions.
 - Deliberation - we will try both chat and verbal deliberation. Once any supporting material for a motion has been provided and reasonable time given to clarifying questions, deliberation will take place. In the interest of participation, we will enable chat comments to be submitted without being recognized by the Moderator. At the same time, people can

“raise hand” in Zoom to be recognized by the Moderator, as above. So there will be both verbal and chat contributions to the deliberation. During the meeting if we sense this is not working well, we will disable chat and deliberation will be done verbally using the “raise hand” feature.

- Vote on motion. Motions and amendments will be posted in a Zoom poll for voting. If there is a close vote, we will request a vote via chat.
- Getting help during the meeting. There will be a person assisting the technical delivery of the meeting. We will provide contact information at the start of the meeting in the chat of how to get help during the meeting.

I appreciate the extra effort everyone is making to make the Annual Meeting successful!

Kristin Moore, Meeting Moderator. kmoore.gm@gmail.com

Agenda for the Annual Meeting

A. Meeting Call to Order: Moderator Kristin Moore

B. Opening Prayer: Reverend Howard Dana

C. Introduction of Articles: Moderator Kristin Moore

- I. To hear and receive the reports of the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of Parish Donations and the Wright Tavern Futures Task Force. Motion by Peter Nobile, Standing Committee.
 - a. Senior Minister: Rev. Howard Dana
 - b. Standing Committee: Peter Nobile
 - c. Trustees of Parish Donations: Philip vanderWilden
 - d. Report from the Wright Tavern Futures Task Force, Tom Wilson
- II. To recognize outgoing members of the Standing Committee and Nominating Committee and choose all Parish officers for the ensuing year
 - a. Recognition of outgoing Standing Committee members: Liz Rust (Peter Nobile, Kate Svrcek, Jane Barnes, Laurel Doggett, Jeff Brainerd)
 - b. Recognition of outgoing Nominating Committee member: Darien Smith (Eric Moore, Jan Goddard-Taylor)
 - c. Slate for Standing Committee and Officers: Motion by Eric Moore, Nominating Committee.
 - d. Slate for Nominating Committee: Motion by Kate Svrcek, Standing Committee.
- III. To ratify the UU General Assembly delegate slate: Motion by Liz Rust, Denominational Affairs Committee.
- IV. To raise money for all parochial purposes, including the Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020: Motion by Treasurer Jane Barnes.
- V. To act upon any other business that may come before the meeting.

D. Closing: Moderator Kristin Moore

Slate of Officers

FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD

2021 NOMINATION OF OFFICERS OF THE PARISH; MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

- Pursuant to Article V of the Bylaws of First Parish in Concord, the membership is hereby notified of the slate of nominees for election as officers of the Parish and members of the Standing Committee commencing 2021-22.
- Members will be asked to vote on the slate at the Annual Meeting on June 20, 2021.
- Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee of Leanne Baxter, Lora Keane Brown, Jan Goddard-Taylor, Kristin Haddad, Eric Moore, Mark Russell Prior, and Darien Smith.

Michael Beer | *Member at Large (First 3-year term)*



My wife Cynthia and I and our children began coming to Sunday services in 1975 when we moved to Concord. Though we pledged annually, we never became members. I did in 2016 after Cynthia passed away and recently participated as a mentor in the Coming-of-Age program. I am a Professor Emeritus at the Harvard Business School where I was on the active faculty for 30 years teaching, researching, and writing in the field of organizational behavior, change and development. I continue to be active professionally through writing, speaking and board membership at the Center for Higher Ambition Leadership, a not-for-profit organization I co-founded whose mission is to help leaders transform their companies into ones that do well by doing good, and Care Dimensions, a non-for-profit hospice and palliative care healthcare company. First Parish has been and continues to be a community of which I am proud to be member.

Gib Metcalf | *Member At Large (First 3-year term)*



Gib Metcalf has been an active UU for some twenty years and a member of First Parish in Concord since 2013. Gib and his wife, Rebecca Winborn, raised twin sons in Acton, and lived in Washington DC before moving to Concord in 2012. Gib is active in the adult choir and has been a member of the Finance Committee as well as a mentor (twice) and co-leader (once) of Coming of Age. He recently served on an ad hoc committee to assess plans for repainting the belfry. Gib is a Professor of Economics at Tufts University where he has taught since 1994. His main research focus is energy and climate policy.

Caroline Washburn Minkin | *Member At Large (First 3-year term)*



Caroline grew up in Concord and began attending First Parish when she was in middle school. In 2006, Caroline returned to Concord and started attending First Parish with her husband and two daughters. Since that time, Caroline has served on the Religious Education (RE) Committee for multiple terms, and also served as Vice Chair. During her tenure on the RE committee, Caroline was part of a team that worked to reimagine the mission and curriculum for the RE program. As an RE teacher for many years, Caroline has enjoyed volunteering for a number of children's

activities including the children's Christmas Craft Workshop and the bucket brigade. Having dedicated most of her career to public service specializing in healthcare policy for low-income families at both the Federal and State level, Caroline currently works at Tufts Health Plan where she works in both commercial and publicly funded plans. In her free time, Caroline enjoys spending time with her family and dog Teddy and getting outside as much as possible. Caroline is the daughter of First Parish member Anne Fortier and step-daughter of Richard Fortier.

Jennifer Izzo | Clerk (First 1-year term)



Jennifer Izzo has attended First Parish for approximately 15 years. She taught RE classes for several years and attended Ferry Beach several times. She has served on a variety of committees, including the Nominating Committee and Sounding Board. She was an active member of Advocates for Women's Empowerment. She ran 2 fundraising auctions for the church. She also organized several workshops for the church community, including a Wellness Program for Women, yoga classes for FP moms and a Mother-Son Cooking class. In 2017, she arranged for 2 buses to take First Parish members and friends to Washington DC to join the Women's March. Outside of church, Jennifer and her husband, Pete, are parents to 3 boys. She is an in-house attorney at a medical device manufacturer.

Heather Packard | Treasurer (First 1-year term)



Heather Packard has been a member of First Parish since 2008. She and her husband live in Concord and have three children: Sarah, Brian, and Meg. She regularly volunteers with RE along with her daughter's participation in the program including volunteer for years as a Little RE attendant, teaching regular RE classes, and twice as a Little OWL teacher. She mentored COA this spring. For several years she has served on the Annual Pledge Campaign as a steward. Heather's professional background has included financial management and bookkeeping for several nonprofits. In these roles, Heather provided monthly financial reporting and developed annual expense, revenue, and capital budgets.

Kristin Moore | Moderator (Fourth 1-year term)



Kristin Moore has been a member of First Parish since 2004. She regularly volunteered with RE throughout her daughter's participation in the program from pre-K through COA. She co-led COA the past three years and will again next year. For several years she has volunteered at the annual Children's Holiday Craft Fair and is now one of the Executive Elves for the event. She has served on the Annual Pledge Campaign as a steward and a committee member. She was active on the Belonging team. Kristin's professional background includes software development project management, small business operations and non-profit operations and fundraising at Gaining Ground in Concord.

FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD

2021 NOMINATION OF MEMBERS OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

- Pursuant to Article V of the Bylaws of First Parish in Concord, the membership is hereby notified of the slate of nominees for election as members of the Nominating Committee commencing 2021-22.
- Members will be asked to vote on the slate at the Annual Meeting on June 20, 2021.
- Respectfully submitted by the Standing Committee of First Parish.

Jeff Brainerd | *Nominating Committee (First 3-year term)*



Jeff and his family moved to Concord in 2011 and became members of First Parish in 2013. Jeff has served in a number of roles at First Parish, including the Chair of the R.E. Council, a member of the Standing Committee, and an OWL Leader. He has worked in the software industry for over 20 years in Boston and California.

Suzie Weaver | *Nominating Committee (First 3-year term)*



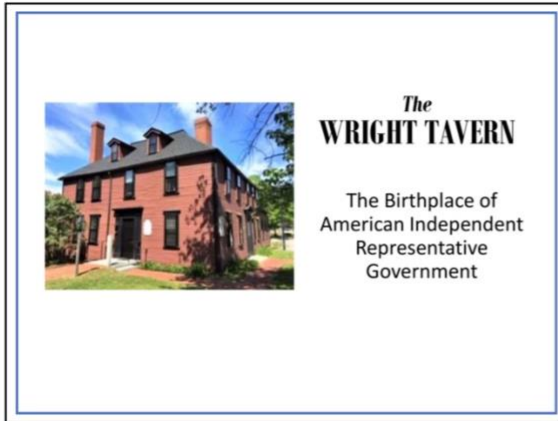
Suzie attended First Parish in Concord for the first time in 1991 and was not familiar with Unitarian Universalism. The church was very welcoming, so she decided to stay to learn more and has not looked back. Her two adult children, Chloe and Cam Vilain, participated in RE from the baby room through high school. Suzie has served in numerous roles over the past 30 years and is currently co-chair of the Advocates for Women's Empowerment (AWE). Suzie especially enjoys volunteering at Rosie's Place as well as attending Ferry Beach, the Women's Goddess Circle, and Women's Retreats. Suzie works as a Director of Analytics at Fidelity Investments, is a competitive adult figure skater, enjoys outdoor activities and travel (locally and abroad), speaking French, and doing anything near the ocean.

Darien Smith | *Nominating Committee (Second 3-year term)*



Darien Smith has attended First Parish since 1983 and raised her children here. She has been actively involved since early on, including teaching RE for 20 years, serving on the Standing Committee in her 30s, singing in the Choir and Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, having fun onstage in church productions, and serving on or chairing various committees and projects over the years. In recent years she's served on the Annual Pledge Campaign Team and planning committees for the Women's Retreats and Ferry Beach Retreats, she has been a delegate to the annual UU General Assembly (GA), and continues to help organize the Women's AM/PM Book Group. She is part of the Laying the Groundwork group that's informing parishioners about the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change "Widening the Circle of Concern", and talking about how we might do work within our own congregation to better live into our theology and values of equity, inclusion, and diversity. Before she became a stay-at-home mom in 1994 and later a "professional volunteer," she taught math at CCHS.

Wright Tavern Presentation



1

Background

At the 2020 First Parish Annual Meeting, we introduced you to the initiative to reinvent the future of the Wright Tavern.

2

Wright Tavern Futures Task Force

Members of the Task Force:

Tom Wilson	Chair, Member of First Parish in Concord
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister, First Parish in Concord
Doug Baker	Former Sexton, First Parish in Concord
Bruce Davidson	Facilitates Manager, First Parish in Concord
Holly Cratsley	Architect and Member, First Parish
Philip vanderWilden	Chair, First Parish Trustees for Parish Donations
Roselyn Romberg	Member, First Parish Trustees
Laura Bernstein	Member, First Parish Trustees
Mel Bernstein	Historian and Member, First Parish in Concord

Other individuals served on the various **Project Teams**, including Shelley Hawks, Mary-Wren vanderWilden, Biff Holt, Anne Fortier, Nancy Johnson, Patty Popov

3

What We've Accomplished

1. Received Town **approval for \$260,000** for critical repairs to the Building. Starting to search for another \$500,000+ to address full range of issues and plans for the WT.
2. Conducted a **major community event on March 24** between community thought-leaders and our Task Force to explore what the Wright Tavern **SHOULD** become.
3. Identified and conducted background research on **35 organizations**.
4. Created a new **501(c)(3) organization and Board** to oversee the Wright Tavern:
Wright Tavern Legacy Trust

4

What We've Accomplished (continued)

5. Received strong "endorsement" from the First Parish Standing Committee.
6. Established a **team to develop the plans** for major repairs, improvements and restoration to the Wright Tavern. Will not start till we have sufficient dollars – est. start August 2022.
7. Created and **deepened our relationships** with Minuteman National Historical Park, Concord Town Tourism, REV 250, Concord Museum, several Town Historical Committees.
8. Developed a **Vision Statement** for what we want the Wright Tavern to become. This will serve to guide our plans, decisions and community involvement.

5

5

Our Vision for the Wright Tavern

"The Wright Tavern is a Center for the exploration and renewal of democracy in America."



6

6

What is Next



7

7

What is Next – Hand Off



Thank you to
the Wright
Tavern
Futures Task
Force



Welcome to
the Wright
Tavern
Legacy Trust
Board

8

8

Who Will Be the New Board of Trustees?



Doug Baker
Mel Bernstein
Shelley Hawks
Peter Nobile
Roselyn Romberg
Mary-Wren
vanderWilden
Tom Wilson
???
???



If you would like to be involved, please contact Tom Wilson. Here is an opportunity for you to make a contribution to fulfilling our Vision for the Wright Tavern.

9



The **WRIGHT TAVERN**

"The Wright Tavern is a Center for the exploration and renewal of democracy in America."

THANK YOU

General Assembly 2021 Delegates

Liz Rust

Jan Power

Lillian Anderson

Darien Smith

Hank Sorrett

Margie Saphier

Chuck MacDonald

Lois Suarez

Holli Jones White

Meg Hargreaves

Beth Norton

Annual Report of the Senior Minister

Rev. Howard N. Dana

What an awful year! My eighth year with First Parish in Concord was consumed by COVID-19. This global pandemic affected every aspect of church life. The congregation, staff, and I did as well as we could, but the collective trauma we experienced left damage. In needing to change quickly, our ability to adapt has left us both adaptive and very tired. Mostly the congregation held together—I think. Until we are back in person this fall, I will not know how the congregation really fared this past year. Many people were active in keeping committees and groups together. The staff worked really hard to reach out to people. Attendance at our online worship services was good and steady. But we know some people needed to check out for a while. The pandemic was especially hard on families where work, school, and church were all online. Zoom helped many in our congregation connect when feeling isolated. And Zoom fatigue is quite real. It allowed us to get things done, but we were missing the community that comes from being with people. Despite the challenges, we accomplished much.

Sunday mornings we had church. By the time we return to the building in the fall, we will have been doing services online for over 18 months. The church staff worked really hard to making Sunday mornings meaningful for our whole congregation. Beth Norton, Anderson Manuel, and Brendan Ferrari learned new technologies so that choirs could stay together and make music. Despite Zoom being a poor platform for sharing music, we all sang this year. Rev. Amy Freedman and Dawn van Patten put tremendous effort into programing for children and youth. We had a children's message during each service. An online family service transitioned to RE Connect as we learned what families needed. Coming of Age, Youth Group, and sexuality education continued this year. Rev. Liz Weber often led us in prayer, keeping us grounded. Eric Huenneke played the organ or piano for us almost every Sunday, giving us a glimpse into our sanctuary. Adrienne Betancourt scheduled and produced over 40 social action candle moments, working with dozens of lay people to write and record them. Jade Sylvan preached and did readings as part of their internship. And our two tech people, Lille vander Zanden and Sarah Richie, kept the services running smoothly week after week. The Zoom chat feature allowed for congregational participation that we then wove into the services. A balm for both the staff and the congregation, online worship was intimate, personal, emotional, and sustaining.

Oh, and there was an election. Despite the fear of COVID-19, Americans turned out in record numbers to vote in the presidential election. Many members of First Parish in Concord joined other Unitarian Universalists in an effort to "UU the Vote." And it worked. Through postcards, phone calls, rallies, and getting out the vote, we UUs made a difference at the polls. We also helped minister to each other through the trauma of the election season and its aftermath. It would have been enough to have had the pandemic to deal with, but we also had to see our democracy seriously threatened and our nation's capital overrun with rioters. The work goes on.

Amid a global pandemic, First Parish in Concord embarked on four large, ambitious projects—Greening the Campus, the Wright Tavern Futures Task Force, a Congregational Life Committee, and Laying the Groundwork for a Commission on Institutional Change. All of these projects will take years to complete, but they got their start during COVID-19. Proceeding from last year's vote at the annual meeting, the Greening the Campus group had a slow start. It was not easy finding people to volunteer for the work. This spring two generous donors gave \$60,000 of seed money to get things going. The Wright Tavern Futures Task Force met monthly and did a tremendous amount of work toward making our historic tavern open to the public. This year studies were done, a separate 501(c)3 was formed, and community support

was gauged. A new board of the Wright Tavern Legacy Trust will take the work toward a 2024 goal. The new Congregational Life Committee delivered daffodils to all church households and helped with the conversations about reopening the church buildings. Working with the Membership Committee, the CLC will be instrumental in the success of our coming back together and increasing our sense of community. Lastly, the Laying the Groundwork group reached out to various groups to talk about the UUA report *Widening the Circle of Concern*. The group recommends we form our own Commission on Institutional Change to look at First Parish through an anti-racism lens.

Doing a completely online Annual Pledge Campaign was a challenge again this year. And our congregation proved itself to be generous, as usual. To make up for lower pledges from people who were economically hard-hit by the pandemic, many people raised their pledges for the coming year. With the use of some of our surplus pledges from prior years, we will be able to operate next year. Despite the good efforts during the pledge campaign, First Parish in Concord is still dangerously dependent on its largest donors. Likewise, too many in the congregation give at a level well below their capacity. If steps are not taken to increase pledging or raise additional funds, the congregation will face a funding crisis in the future. We cannot keep asking for more and more money from fewer and fewer larger donors.

While we were forced to be out of our building, much work happened onsite this year. Bruce Davidson took on many tasks as our new Facilities Manager, including a new roof on the meetinghouse—the first in over 40 years. He had the floors in the Parish Hall and Parlor refinished, an apartment remodeled, and many other needs addressed. Fifi Ball, Sarah Burns, and Tina Storey kept the congregation operating well by attending to communications, the website, fundraising, bookkeeping, and human resources. We were all very conscious of COVID-19 precautions and worked hard to keep everyone who entered the building safe.

While this was a year of struggle and misery, it was also a year of growth and good work. First Parish in Concord never closed. We just did without our building for a year and a half. I am impressed with all the ministry, music, learning, and social action that happened. During the pandemic, our congregation helped its members, its community, and the wider world. We will make it through this difficult time. And we know reopening will not be easy either. As the COVID-19 pandemic still rages around the globe, we will need to be careful and deliberate as we reopen. Some are eager to come back to church—and some are frightened. We will work to bring our whole congregation along. Lastly, I hope we do not “go back to the way things were.” We have learned to be kind and patient with each other. We have learned to go slower and not leave people behind. We have learned how interdependent we are on each other. We must not lose these benefits of the pandemic. We have been changed for the better—we must stay changed.

Respectfully submitted,
Howard

Annual Report of the Minister for Pastoral Care

Rev. Liz Weber

This was a year like no other. The pandemic has impacted us all, and the need for pastoral support has been significant. Many congregants lost loved ones to COVID or to normal causes exacerbated by pandemic stress. Three of our members died from COVID, and more became ill or were exposed. The pandemic asked all of us to change our daily lives, including adapting to online church. Some found that the shutdown of public life offered a much-needed opportunity to slow down. Over time, we all felt the daily losses and traumas take a toll.

Through it all, in my second year with you, I've been glad to be at First Parish. I love working with Howard and our staff team. And I'm touched by the care parishioners showed for one another, whether you called a friend to check in or formally volunteered on one of our teams.

I have provided direct pastoral care to individuals and in small groups, supervised our robust teams, partnered with Beth Norton for our monthly Open Door vespers service, taught a course on the spirituality of delight, preached and prayed on Sundays, and generally done my best to be of service as needed.

I especially enjoyed partnering with colleagues and lay leaders around social justice efforts. Adrienne Betancourt and I recruited over two dozen participants for Beloved Conversations, an online program through the UU seminary Meadville Lombard. CC King, Jiffy Read, Dana Snyder-Grant, and I designed and led the Healing Embodied Racism course around Resmaa Menakem's work.

At Howard's invitation, I formed our COVID staff advisory team this spring with Amy Freedman and Beth Norton. Together, with Bill Taylor as our public health epidemiology consultant, we have worked to clarify the values and scientific benchmarks that guide us in deciding when to keep or lift various safety precautions. These were ultimately affirmed by Howard and the Standing Committee. We have also worked on creative approaches to multiplatform and "post-COVID" ministry and partnered in late spring with the new Congregational Life Committee to host Community Conversations about re-opening. This has been very challenging but important work.

Many interest groups continued online through the pandemic via Zoom, with some, such as the photography club, becoming more informal or sporadic. The First Tuesday Group, with new co-chairs Anne Fortier and Nancy McJennett and steering committee members Bob Andrews, Linda Benua, Mary Clarke, Rev. Margie King Saphier, Jack Nevison (publicist), and myself as ministerial advisor offered a range of programs focused on the spiritual needs of people age 55 and up. Recently, Bob resigned from the steering committee after years of good service and Nancy Cronin joined. The Buddhist Group continued with two meeting times each week. Dana Snyder-Grant has offered metta meditation weekly. Both drew a mix of parishioners and non-members.

Most of our regular pastoral care ministries continued through the pandemic. I am grateful to all of you who offered your time and attention to your fellow parishioners!

Pastoral Care Lay Ministers work directly with me to respond to acute pastoral needs as well as meeting approximately monthly with people who need ongoing support. Lay Ministers are Paula Adelson, Sally Brandon Bemis, Diane Clapp, Lori Gill-Pazaris, Peter Nobile, Dana Snyder-Grant, Virginia Taylor, and Rebecca Winborn.

We continued the Cancer Support Group facilitated by CC King, the Caretakers Support Group facilitated by Diane Clapp, and the Parents Support Group facilitated by myself.

The By Your Side Singers, our pastoral choir under the direction of Beth Norton with support from Dana Snyder-Grant, brought comfort to ill or isolated parishioners even through a screen where usually only one voice could be heard at a time.

Meals prepared by the Open Table food pantry were available for parishioners experiencing surgery, illness, or bereavement. Enid Boasberg, Bev Bringle, Pat Kane, Petra Betts, and Marian Stanley were our delivery team.

Our Prayer Shawl Knitters and New Baby Welcomer continued to be of service. Ingrid Wheeler and Lois Whitney headed up the knitters, and Louisa Paushter was our baby welcomer. Shawls were delivered to many parishioners, and baby blankets to our newest member, both often with other comfort items such as meals. We also have heart pillows made by our RE kids a few years ago, a sweet alternative to the prayer shawls.

Our Holiday Plant delivery continued this year. At Christmas, we brought plants to everyone we knew had been bereaved in the past year. At Easter, we focused on our most isolated members. The program was coordinated by Linda Reynolds, Caitlin Selle, Ellen Whitney, and myself. Many, many people volunteered to make deliveries. The Women's Parish Association and individual donors funded the plants.

The Holden Fund continued financial support to church members and Concord residents who are caregivers for homebound family members and are experiencing financial need. The Fund's panel was Linda Reynolds, Alice Van Deusen, Rev. Howard Dana, and myself.

The Pastoral Care Library was tended to as needed by Enid Boasberg.

Our Pastoral Care Council did not meet this year, though they were responsive when I needed them. Members include Judy Dembsey, chair, Mary Ann Barton, Enid Boasberg, Fred Van Deusen, and Virginia Taylor, with my ministerial partnership. Likewise, our Rides ministry and thinking of you cards were not available while our buildings were closed.

As we look ahead to next year, we will adapt again in new ways. My hope is that we begin to heal and continue to grow in our care for one another and our wider world.

Music Ministry Annual Report

Elizabeth Norton
Director of Music and Arts Ministry

I begin this year's annual report with the last paragraph of the 2020 Music Ministry Annual Report:

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic closed our Meeting House and transformed the whole ministry of First Parish into an on-line Zoom ministry. We were immediately called to respond to the question, "what is First Parish without the Meeting House?" Along with all the other staff, our musicians adapted quickly to the demands of on-line worship and learned the technical limitations and advantages of Zoom. Eric Huenneke, our organist, found a way to bring organ music and the Sanctuary into our virtual services by playing live in the empty Sanctuary. Anderson Manuel stepped up to lead a capella hymns over Zoom. As we developed a new liturgy for on-line worship, Choir, CVE, Gospel Choir, By Your Side Singers and Rise Up Singing continued to meet on the Zoom platform with the working mantra that our goal was "connection, not perfection." This need for adaptation has challenged us all and called us to expand our skills and our ideas of what music ministry can be. At this writing, it looks likely that worship services and meetings will remain virtual well into the next church year. First Parish music leaders and musicians are discerning what is essential in our ministry together and how best to continue it on-line. We stay connected. We make music any way we can. We look for new ways to make music together. We have courage. We hold on to what is good.

This paragraph was prescient. When I wrote it, we had little idea we would be out of the Meeting House for over a year. But we were beginning to learn what would be necessary to stay connected and to be a congregation that could not meet together physically.

For all of the music staff and those parishioners who stayed active remotely, this required continuous learning and adaptation. No more so than for Brendan Ferrari, our indomitable new Children's Choir Director who accepted the position in June of 2020 knowing it was quite possible that he would not be meeting in person with his new singers. Brendan brought tremendous enthusiasm, teaching skill, technical facility and a willingness to learn and experiment to a job leading music with children that he STILL has not met in person. Brendan maintained a regular connection with our RE families by working with Rev. Amy Freedman to lead the Sunday morning Family Worship and RE-Connect, and with the wider congregation through leading music in worship. It was such a pleasure to welcome Brendan to our music staff team in this extraordinary year.

It was a year to acquire new skills and new vocabulary. The First Parish Choir and the Gospel Ensemble, became adept at using Soundtrap, an on-line recording studio, to create recordings of anthems and hymns for our Zoom worship services. We found ways to "fool zoom" and work with, or around the sound latency inherent in Zoom that makes music performance challenging and discouraging. In By Your Side Singers and in some of our Open Door services, we became

playful in our singing, experimenting with call and response, ostinato and varying musical textures to try and make music together. And sometimes, we just sang together in what we have come to call “beautiful Zoom Cacophony.”

I learned skills I wasn’t taught in music school! The amazing video editor Davinci Resolve provided hours of creative challenge and frustration and helped me produce, mostly by trial and error, some satisfying music videos for Zoom worship. The afore-mentioned Soundtrap provided similar gifts and challenges, with the added facet of learning the technology while teaching others to use it. All of us in beginners mind. I came to enjoy sound mixing and video production and found it to be a good creative outlet in a year when I could not make live music. But oh, the time . . . !

Eric Huenneke kept us connected with our Sanctuary by providing live and pre-recorded organ music for our Zoom services. It was really wonderful to be able to watch Eric’s hands and feet in these on-line services. One wonders if we will need a “pedal cam” once we return to in-person services! Anderson Manuel continues to be a positive and creative leader of our teen Gospel Ensemble, which remained strong throughout the year. With the able assistance of pianist Minjing Vandenbos, the group created a number of recordings for worship and for fun. The congregation treasured their appearances in our worship services.

I am reminded of the lines for Julie Forest Middleton’s Solstice poem, “The Longest Night:”

“A year like no other this was

Testing us beyond what we’d ever imagined . . .”

Working at the edges of our comfort zones “beyond what we’d ever imagined” was exhausting and, sometime, exhilarating. “Connection, not perfection” was a motto that served us well. This was a year to make mistakes, to be vulnerable and to value our community even more because we could not be together. My hope is that our year of dwelling in pandemic isolation has showed us new ways of being that will serve us well when we are able to be together again. Though this was by far the most challenging of my 27 years at First Parish, I remain deeply grateful to be a member of this amazing staff and a leader of this congregation. I continue to hold on to what is good and have hope for our future.

Religious Education Program Annual Report

Amy Freedman, Minister of Religious Education
2019-2020

2020- 2021 Religious Education at a Glance

First Parish in Concord
Unitarian Universalist

Religious Exploration:

Group	Fall	Winter	Spring
Ages 0- Grade 5	Family Service (Live-stream) with Resources for At-Home Exploration		Family RE-Connect (Zoom) with Resources for At-Home Exploration
Grade 5		Sexuality Education (7 Sessions)	
Grade 6	Sexuality Education (7 Sessions)		
Grade 6, 7, 8	Junior Youth Group		
Grade 8	Sex Education (6 Sessions)	Sexuality Education (7 Sessions)	
Grade 9	Coming of Age		
High School	High School Youth Group		

Outreach:

Back to School Blessing postcards
Elf Workshop Craft Bags
Winter Holiday cards
Valentine postcards
Care Packages for [18/19 year olds](#)
Easter Egg Hunt
Stuffed Animal April Vacation Camp
Summer Party Kick-off Kits

All Ages Services:

Homecoming- September 13
All Souls Service- November 1
Thanksgiving- November 24
Christmas Eve- Dec. 24, 7pm
Youth Service- March 21
Coming of Age- May 2

Family Events:

Book & Puzzle Swap- Sept. 7
CROP Walk- Oct. 11-18
UU the Vote postcards & signs
Bucket Brigade- Dec. 5
Christmas Caroling- Dec. 18
"This Little Sign of Mine"- Jan 18
Book & Puzzle Giveaway- April 17
Mother's Day Peace Walk- May 10
June Journeys- June

Parent Sessions:

C. of Age Orientation- Sept. 13
RE Q & A- Sept. 17
Parent Circle- Oct. 1
Sexuality Education [Info.](#)- Oct. 8
Parent Circle- Oct. 15
Parent Circle- Nov. 19
Bi-weekly Support Group- Liz Weber

2020 Back to School Blessing:

*May you have a healthy body and a peaceful mind.
May you have energy for all that is different and new.
May you share kindness with yourself and others and see kindness returned.
May you feel close and connected in these times of physical distance.
May you feel the love of our community each and every day.*

—Dawn Van Patten

Religious Education Annual Report 2021

This has been a difficult year for our children, teens, and parents. On top of all the challenges of daily life during a pandemic, it was hard not being able to gather in person. At First Parish in Concord, we are fortunate to have the resources, teamwork, and skills to continue to worship, connect, educate, and support one another through online platforms. All the relationships, programs, and traditions that we hold dear at First Parish in Concord needed to happen in new ways. I am grateful that Dawn Van Patten, our Assistant Director of RE, and I were able to support one another through this year that required us to continue to experiment and reach out to our families who were not able to support what is usually a cooperative Religious Education program.

After experimenting over Spring 2020 and hearing from some First Parish parents that children were “Zoomed Out” after a week of online school, we launched a 20 minute “Family Service” with resources for At-Home Exploration for children in Preschool to Grade 5. Each service was hosted by Dawn and I with special guests from our congregation. We loved working with Anderson Manuel and our new Children's Choir Director, Brendan Ferrari who offered a friendly presence and music to enhance our weekly themes. Special thanks to Peter Bowden for helping us bring this new initiative to life! The Family Service was streamed live on our Facebook page, within our Family Facebook Group, and YouTube channel. A recording was also available for families to watch at another time. Although we were proud of this effort, we switched to “Family RE-Connect,” as a way for us to connect more directly through a Zoom meeting that is not recorded. In 30 minutes, we are able to explore deep subjects like prayer, meditation, racism, peace, friendship, caregiving, UU principles while offering a fun and engaging experience.

This year, we offered online comprehensive sexuality education for three age-groups: 10-11, 12, and 14-15. There were thirty-three participants overall. The UUA discouraged congregations from using the Our Whole Lives curriculum which was not designed for online learning. We were blessed by the enthusiasm and expertise of Lora Venesy who designed and offered our online program and received a stipend for her expertise and leadership. The 2020-21 program was called SEAGUULL (Sexuality Education Awareness & Growth through UU Lifelong Learning). Lora was supported by Sarah Chapman and Jeff Brainerd who are trained OWL facilitators. Exploring issues related to health, sexuality, relationships, identity, and self-care was especially important during this time of isolation.

Our Coming of Age program was held on Sunday afternoons over Zoom with two in-person gatherings: solos in Walden Woods and a Visual Arts Workshop at First Parish. Sixteen 9th graders participated. I am deeply grateful for this group—many of whom grew up in our congregation. Special thanks to our leaders Kristin Moore and Jim Tull, their mentors, and families.

We have a new Junior Youth Group of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. They meet about twice a month online and in-person for support, friendship, and social action. Thanks to Dawn and Lora for their leadership!

Our High School Youth Group met online and in-person on Sunday evenings. They offered an amazing Youth Service on Sunday, March 21. Madzie Burnham, our Lead Youth Advisor is a source of hope and strength for our teens. Thanks also to Youth Advisors, Eric Moore, Kathy Tyrer, Jade Sylvan, and Jane Blumberg for your support!

As I write this report, we are in the midst of another transition but a more hopeful one. People 12 and older are becoming vaccinated. We are in the midst of Community Conversations about Re-opening First Parish. I look forward to being able to gather in-person. We will also continue to use digital tools to expand our reach as a community. Above all, we need one another.

With Loving Care,
Amy
Rev. Amy Freedman
Minister of Religious Education

Facilities Manager Annual Report

Bruce Davidson

Prepared by Bruce Davidson, Facilities Manager; started position 9/1/2020

This year will be remembered for the Covid-19 pandemic and the changes it brought to First Parish, Concord, the country, and the world. In-person services were replaced by online services for the entire 2020-2021 church year as the virus spread and vaccines were developed and deployed. The main church building at First Parish was closed to all but staff. A temporary opening of the building in the Fall was short lived, as cases of the virus surged in Middlesex County, including the towns in the First Parish community.

Doug Baker, Head Sexton and Sacristan, retired on 8/31/2020 after 40 years of stellar service. With the time provided by the closing of the facilities, Doug compiled an exhaustive and comprehensive set of binders containing text and photographs of the systems, procedures, processes, inspections, and historical background information for me. He dedicated himself to ensuring I would be successful in the newly created position of Facilities Manager. We became close and I prevailed upon him many times for guidance in the first quarter of my tenure. Doug gladly answered all questions and covered for me when I was absent for health issues. For this I will be forever grateful.

Projects

10-6 Concord Greene Condominium Renovation

I was offered and accepted the Facilities Manager Position on 7/2/2020. Prior to my start date of 9/1/2020, and separate from my salaried employment, I was engaged as an independent contractor by the Trustees of Parish Donations (TPD) to work with Roselyn Romberg on the management and contractor work of extensive renovations to the property at 10 Concord Greene, Unit #6. Doug and Diana Baker moved into the property in October 2020.

Ball House (#25 Church Green) Renovations

On 9/1/20, Trustee Roselyn Romberg and I planned and began a renovation of the Ball House, which had recently been vacated by Doug and Diana Baker. I arranged for contractors to submit proposals and made a project plan in Box, an online collaborative tool Roselyn and I had used successfully on the Concord Greene renovation project.

Ball House renovations included:

- Extensive electrical upgrades
- Plumbing upgrades
- New windows and doors
- Cellulose insulation installed in walls and ceilings
- Plaster repairs, painting, and new hardware on cabinets
- Vinyl flooring in kitchen and bath

- Laminate flooring in all other rooms
- New Roth double-lined oil tank
- Replaced washer and dryer with stackable unit
- Retiled bathtub and shower

In March 2021, once the bulk of the renovations were completed, the property was rented.

Wright Tavern Futures Task Force

I attended meetings of the Wright Tavern Futures Task Force and assisted in the CPC Grant Application by identifying, arranging visits for, and procuring proposals from vendors for the sprinkler system, HVAC, insulation, and fire alarms.

Steeple Project CPC Grant

Proposals had been received for renovations to the gilded dome, clock hands, and weathervane on the steeple and the painting and repair of the steeple woodwork. Yankee Steeplejacks was selected as contractor. Work will begin in June 2021.

Meeting House Roof

In May 2021, the main Meeting House roof was replaced after over 40 years using architectural heavy duty GAF shingles.

Meeting House Painting

Created and issued RFP to assist in budget planning.

Greening the First Parish Campus Task Force

- In keeping with best, safest practices, we chose Safe Paws ice and snow melt, replacing calcium chloride.
- I discussed composting in an introductory conversation with Peter Lowitt. When we are back to in-person services, our composting may be on campus and be used in various flower/plant beds or onsite at other local partner organizations.
- I have assisted the Greening the First Parish Campus Task Force in securing quotes for various insulation and other weatherizing projects.

Air Quality Investigation

We investigated air quality in the main building with our HVAC contractor with regards to Covid-19 and determined that UV lighting within the ductwork was an option. We decided there was limited return on that investment based on the number of people in the building then and judged our current safety protocols to be sufficient.

Administrative and Workflow Process

- Made new folder structure and brought over photos and files from old computer to new computer. These files are uploaded to FP's OneDrive for visibility and accessibility to Fifi and others.

- Created Box file structure for Project Plans and Cumulative Meeting Agendas to manage:
 - Facility Manager's To Do list
 - Operations Director/Facilities Manager: Weekly meetings with Fifi Ball
 - Wright Tavern and residences: Weekly meetings with Roselyn Romberg (TPD)
 - Ball House Renovations
 - Greening the First Parish Campus Task Force
- Digitizing pertinent information for institutional knowledge repository that can be:
 - quickly accessed by Facilities Manager and/or others
 - used for proactive planning
- Event planning
 - I created a form to organize and plan events.
 - This form is designed to be shared with Sarah (church administrator), sextons, ministerial staff, and any other stakeholders.

Projects/Events

- Autumn 2020 miscellaneous
 - First Parish was the partial focus of a protest. With Howard's guidance, we were prepared and practiced peaceful non-engagement on the front steps and lawn.
 - A vigil for Ruth Bader Ginsburg after her passing was held outdoors.
 - Wright Tavern: repaired bricks over front walkway sinkhole
- Parish Hall, Parlor, and Stage
 - Floors were stripped, sanded, and refinished with water-based polyurethane, creating a lighter appearance in those areas.
 - A leak in the roof outside the corner of the parlor, most likely caused by ice dams, stained the ceiling, wall, and Dana Greeley portrait. The portrait was subsequently sent out to a professional art conservator for cleaning.
- Milldam Nursery School (MNS)
 - Met with Kate Damon and staff at MNS to assess and address their needs
 - In Autumn 2020 they installed a 40' tent. In early Spring 2021 they installed a 20'x20' rented tent to be shared with First Parish until June 18, after which we take over full tent rental. This has allowed us to offer outdoor distanced meetings with cover from the elements.
- Houses and Wright Tavern (managed by the Trustees of Parish Donations)
 - Autumn 2020: Introduced self to tenants and began servicing buildings and responding to requests.
 - #7 Church Green/White Cottage Mold Remediation
 - Testing revealed mold, primarily in basement and crawlspace.
 - A remediation company was contracted and performed a comprehensive corrective program.
 - We replaced the basement flooring with sheet vinyl.
 - Exterminator has been contracted for pest control (mice, carpenter ants, etc.) for the four residences (#s 1, 7, 23, and 25 Church Green) and main church building

- Lexington Alarm: Upgraded the main alarm radio box and added a strobe light/alarm to the Parish Hall stage.
- Contractors/vendors:
 - Snowplowing: kept vendor
 - Shoveling and snow blowing: kept vendor
 - Fall and spring cleanup: repriced and went with different vendor to save money
 - Irrigation: kept vendor
 - Lawn care: kept vendor—organic products are used and applied by Simply Safer Lawns
 - John Sullivan, long time plumber for First Parish and the Trustees, was extremely helpful in educating me about systems and back stories of installations, etc.
 - Todd Whitney, in the same spirit, was of great help to me and very responsive
- Women's Parish Association (WPA)
 - Coordinating with WPA to replace older 6' tables with modern tables that are lighter, easier to set up, and more durable.
 - After winterizing the Herb Garden, I am working with WPA to plant and tend the garden in 2021. I am also working on a transition with the WPA's horticulturist Dee Smithers to maintain the Johnson Garden.
- Sanctuary Balcony Ceiling Repair
 - Repaired and painted ceiling that was damaged in 2019 or 2020 by dropped water bottle in balcony
- Replaced utility sink faucet in main hallway closet, which necessitated emptying the WPA closet, removing and repairing shelving, and repainting shelves, trim, doors, and walls in back kitchen area.
- Resurfaced stainless-steel discoloration in the kitchen sink using 1000 grit and 2000 grit sandpaper.

Inspections

All inspections were planned and performed in a timely manner.

Social Action Annual Report

Author of Introduction: Adrienne Betancourt, full-time Social Action Manager

Expanded Programming Geared for the Pandemic

Fiscal Year 2020-21 (the year of the Global Pandemic) was an admirable year for social action at our Church. In the Spring of 2020, the groups were urged and supported to start tackling the steep learning curve of doing everything online. They utilized many new and effective publicity and communication tools. The Social Action Manager assisted and encouraged all groups to share and try out particularly successful online approaches. By September 2020, the groups were running with activities and creative and well-attended online programming.

Below, please find the annual reports for the social action groups at First Parish in Concord. In addition, congregants could easily find weekly-updated individual social action opportunities published by the new Social Action Manager in the First Parish Weekly newsletter that were either adult or family-friendly and offered in-house or by UU affiliates in the greater UU world. The Social Action Manager sent action opportunities to the RE program from which they chose some to highlight in their own RE newsletter. Non-UU local social actions and those of our Church's partners and allies were featured on our First Parish in Concord-Social Action Community Facebook page, managed by the Social Action Manager.

Social Action from the Pulpit

Social Action and justice issues were included in every Sunday service, and often multiple times. Social Action was often featured in the monthly Open Door vespers services, as well. Worship staff used the Sunday service opening, chalice lighting, music and songs, children's message, readings and sermons, reflection questions, guest speakers, prayer time, offertory, and invitations to weave social action and justice among the year's services (which followed a general UU historic theme this past fiscal year.)

Share the Plate two-minute presentations (which introduced to the congregation a non-profit organization with which we split the offertory collection 50/50 between supporting the Church and it) resumed in September alternating with the two-minute Social Action Candle. The Social Action Manager worked closely to prepare about 40 different speakers or video presentations to cover all of the Sundays from September through June. She often arranged for the visitor from the Share the Plate organization to stay on and answer questions at our 11 – 11:30 Coffee Hour. Each of the social action groups took at least one and sometimes two Social Action Candles with the opportunity to highlight and celebrate some of their best work.

The nominations process for Share the Plate for the following fiscal year was opened up in February 2021 with a new vetting team composed of the former Standing Committee Chair, the current Treasurer, and a representative from Pastoral Care. The application criteria for STP remained the same, but the webpage and application form were updated to provide more clarity. The STP organizations for 2020-21 were Black Ballot Project, Open Table, National Alliance for

the Mentally Ill, The Nature Connection, Guatemala Aid Fund, Hagar's Sisters, Gaining Ground, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, Concord Prison Outreach, and Household Goods.

Social Action Candles, Share the Plate Presentations, and Social Action from the Pulpit Examples

9/6 Adrienne on UU the Vote--Last Chance to Act

9/13 STP Dir. Horace Small for Black Ballot Power

9/20 Ruthann Brien-Minkin, a representative from our Amnesty International Group

9/27 STP Alice Kaufman for Black Ballot Power

September Adrienne prepared a video for RE service on UU the Vote

10/4 Lora Venesy "Youth Summit on RBG/Roe Act"

10/11 STP Open Table Dir. Jeanine Calabria

10/18 Nancy Kerr Immigrant Justice Task Force addressing food insecurity of immigrants in Framingham

(Children's message Liz and Adrienne "dirt on your face")

10/25 STP Janet Bailey (of WPA) for Open Table

11/1 STP Assistant Director of Community Education and Training, Michelle Ward, for NAMI

11/3 Adrienne presents as part of Election eve vespers service

11/8 ?? Social Action Candle speaker introduction (shout out)???

11/15 STP Lisa Monk, National Alliance for Mental Illness-- In Our Own Voice presenter

Guest at your table inspiring activists, sermon on truth about thanksgiving

11/22 IJTF Laurie Van Loon, speaks about immigrants and mental illness

11/29 First Parish Junior Youth Group member, Rob Pope

12/6 UU Urban Ministry staff video to First Parish Concord thank you for Secret Santa

12/13 STP The Nature Connection-- by First Parish member, Bev Bringle, and their Development and Marketing Director, Jenn Reilly

12/20 Adrienne celebrates FPC participation in special December UU Advocacy Day

12/27 STP The Nature Connection-- by First Parish member, Bev Bringle, and their Development and Marketing Director, Jenn Reilly (second time)

1/3 STP Guatemala Aid Video put together by Jay Barnes

1/7 Adrienne presents as part of post Jan 6 insurrection vespers service

1/10 Adrienne was social action candle speaker on Long History of White Backlash Against a Diverse America

1/17 STP Guatemala Aid video put together by Jay Barnes

Children's message on John Lewis MLK service

1/24 Cindy RJAG theme of interfaith and collaborations with Littleton Interfaith group and MARA

Jade-- Homily: "Unitarianism and Colonialism"

1/31 Fred Van Deusen from Reclaim Our Democracy promoting UUSJ and ROD opportunities for you to work on rescuing and improving our democracy

2/7 STP Hagar's Sisters founder Joyce Shelter Holt

2/14 Kristin Haddad promotes signing up for Beloved Conversations for the spring

2/21 Beth Norton speaks on FP Concord's long association with UUUM

Guest minister is Mary Margaret of UUUM on dismantling white supremacy culture; Adrienne and Anderson do children's message on Freedom Songs

2/28 STP Hagar's Sisters founder Joyce Shelter Holt

March Open Door vespers service features Abby Buehle of IJTF about her relationship with sanctuary resident

3/7 STP Gaining Ground Board member and First Parish member, Amy Capofreddi

3/14 Tony Rodriguez, IJTF, celebrating stay of deportation for sanctuary guest Maria Micario

3/21 Youth member Margot reads and anti-racism poem

FP Youth Service Children's Message" Jane Blumberg- Introduction with members of the Youth Group reading "Letters to a Mother I Barely Know"

3/28 STP video about Gaining Ground

4/4 STP Margie King Saphier for Louis D. Brown Peace Institute

Margie also spoke on Peace Institute for RE service

4/11 Recording Lois Suarez and Holli Jones White on COIC and Widening the Circle

Homily and sermon on Native Americans in Concord area

4/18 STP video testimony of State Representative Liz Miranda on behalf of Louis D. Brown Peace Institute

4/25 Brad Hubbard-Nelson for the Environmental Team about joining ET to meet climate carbon emissions goals

May Open Door vespers service features Lora Venesy and her daughter about their reproductive rights social justice work

5/2 Coming of Age Service No social action candle (just offertory for Concord Prison Outreach)

5/9 STP Don Miller on behalf of Concord Prison Outreach

Adrienne lights chalice in memorial for those who died by violence and Mother's Day Walk for Peace

5/16 Adrienne speaks on pushback with UU denomination against our dismantling white supremacy culture and need for more GA delegates

5/23 STP Sam Williams, new Concord Prison Outreach Director

5/30 Adrienne speaks on Abolition movement to dismantle policing and prisons

Memorial Day anti-war messages from Jade and Howard

6/6 STP overview video from Household Goods website with Board President Barbara Howland at Worship Sharing meeting

6/13 COIC/Widening the Circle laying the groundwork ad hoc group – Peter Nobile on lack of men in social action

6/20 STP Household Goods

New Practice of Having an Intersectional Social Action Theme

Our Year 2020 UU the Vote first-try at an intersectional theme ramped up its activities in September with an ad hoc steering committee that met every week, offering a large array of creative voting social actions which were eagerly embraced by the congregants. This work continued through the elections and into the Georgia run-offs in January. Members of the congregation also participated in deescalation training, a Concord ad hoc group responding to the possibility of a Presidential power grab, and a gathering, on November 4th (the day after the election) at Old North Bridge to reaffirm our protection of democracy (at which our Senior Minister was one of the speakers).

The Social Action Manager invited the social action groups to propose a new intersectional theme for 2021 and a vote among them chose Racial Justice, which they embraced with enthusiasm, impressive programming, and many collaborations over the only six months remaining in the fiscal year (which are noted in the annual reports.) Silohs came down. In addition to co-sponsoring events, representatives from our social action groups went and visited with each other through the zoom meetings. The Social Action Manager facilitated, shared the best practices of each group, gave trainings, and empowered social action groups and individual

congregants doing social action. She responded to dozens of requests for information and invitations to forge relationships from representatives of faith-based groups and other groups outside our Church. First Parish in Concord increased its fame as a bastion of social action. Also note within the annual reports the collaborations with external partners and allies and coalitions. The Social Action Manager made sure that three new delegates to our partner, UU Urban Ministry, in Dorchester, Boston, were set up to attend UUUM's opening delegate meeting in May and continue representing us through the next fiscal year. A member of our congregation sits on the Board of UU Mass Action. Another congregant plays a leadership role within UUSJ. The Social Action Manager is part of the continuing UU the Vote national group.

We fielded one of the largest groups of congregants to visit Massachusetts State legislators at the December and the April UU Mass Action online Advocacy Days.

Dismantling White Supremacy Culture

In addition to many racial justice events listed within the annual reports, below, the Social Action Manager asked the Minister of Pastoral Care to work with her on recruiting new people to do Beloved Conversations in the spring with the offer of paying their tuition as needed (\$250 per congregant). They recruited 17 new congregants, and 5 members of the staff also signed up for Beloved Conversations. Coming out of the June 2020 UUA General Assembly was a delegation from First Parish in Concord eager to bring the UUA model of a Committee on Institutional Change to our very own Church. A subgroup of this delegation formed a "Laying the Groundwork" ad hoc committee in the winter that visited—online—many parts of the Church to build awareness. They then worked with the Senior Minister to create an entire Sunday service (scheduled for June 13th) to inspire the congregation to enter into this important process.

In sum, social justice was very noticeably pervasive throughout the Church's programming.

SAC Program Reports

Advocates for Women's Empowerment

Author: Lora Venesy

Mission: AWE is a social action group that is dedicated to advancing the rights and lives of women, through advocacy, direct action, and education.

Vision: We envision a world where all genders work to optimize women's quality of life by removing social, economic, political, and institutional barriers, to promote choices, access, and agency.

Background: In 2012, after 'Reproductive Justice' was made a priority at General Assembly, a group formed at First Parish. In 2016, the group changed its name from "Reproductive Justice" to "Advocates for Women's Empowerment" (or AWE). AWE meets monthly, coordinates regular activities, a monthly newsletter, and an active Facebook page-

<https://www.facebook.com/concordwomen/>. AWE is open and welcome to all, regardless of age, gender, faith, orientation, etc. There are approximately 25 active members and 140+ friends, which include both FP and community members. Co-leaders: Lora Venesy and Suzie Weaver.

Year in review:

- **Monthly Meetings-** In prior years, we met monthly for housekeeping, community building, planning, & discussions. This year we held semi-regular meetings via Zoom.
- **LUNAFEST-** 8th annual women's film festival was held online on April 9th, with a virtual discussion on April 11th. This year's event raised \$1000 to benefit Renewal House, a Boston domestic violence shelter for women and their children.
- **Toiletry Drive-** Held in the month of April. Items were collected for Rosie's Place.
- **Rosie's Place Volunteering-** We were unable to take volunteer trips to make meals there this year, due to Covid-19, but hope to begin again next year.
- **Share the Plate-** AWE applied & was awarded STP funding for the Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund. The offering plate will be shared with this organization in April of 2022.
- **Advocacy-** We participated in events and advocacy in 2020, leading to the passage of an adapted version of the ROE Act, which increases access to abortion in MA! There are several additional bills that are currently being worked on this session, such as the EACH Act, Healthy Youth Act, and others working to increase access to Emergency Contraception, medical abortion, and maternal equity. Advocacy includes letter writing, postcards, zooms with legislators, etc.
- **Racial Justice-** Ongoing collaboration with RJAG (Racial Justice Action Group) to give opportunities to fight racism as an intersectional issue with feminism and women's rights. Opportunities include becoming pen pals with women incarcerated in Framingham and educational programming.

- Thank yous- Hosting ongoing successful postcarding campaign to thank abortion providers in Massachusetts and across the US.
- Collaborations- Continued participation in larger women's rights communities. Members of AWE are represented in the Boston Red Cloaks, Mystic Valley Action for Choice, and a statewide coalition for women's rights. These collaborations included podcasts and interviews with candidates & legislators regarding women's health bills this session.

Goals for 2020-21:

We hope to return to in-person get-togethers to advocate, volunteer, and build community. We will continue LUNAFEST and other activities to increase education and awareness for women's issues, as well as continue to be leaders in the fight for women's health legislation.

Amnesty International Group 15

Author: Nancy Lyons

First Parish members: Phil Villers, Ruthann Brien-Minkin, Nancy Lyons

Officers: Coordinator, Kathleen Bean; Secretary, Ruthann Brien; Treasurer, Carol Kyte

Membership: 15 members

This year:

Immigration and asylum issues have continued to be a focus for Group 15, with a member of our group attending the F.P. Concord Immigration Justice Task Force meetings and joining it in a successful effort to release Ugandan Pastor Steven Tendo from detention in Texas. Group 15 has advocated for immigration-related bills in the Massachusetts legislature, including The Safe Communities Act and the Work and Family Mobility Act, as well as for the safe release of people in detention, jails and prisons. Locally, we support the work of Dignity in Asylum, which has been vetted by Amnesty/USA to qualify for "community sponsorship" from other Amnesty groups.

Regular monthly meeting activities (currently on Zoom):

—Urgent Action Letters: We each send a minimum of two letters internationally, advocating for human rights activists who have been imprisoned or face other punishment for peaceful protests.

—Individual at Risk program: We celebrated the death-row release of the Sudanese schoolboy we'd been championing for some years, and took on a new case: Maria Ressa, executive editor of the news outlet Rappler, who is facing several lawsuits after publishing articles critical of Philippine President Duterte.

—Abolition of the Death Penalty in the US. This year our focus shifted from an emphasis on individual states to actions supporting the abolition of the Federal death penalty, including thanking those MA delegates who co-sponsored the Durbin/Pressley bills.

—Criminal Justice and Solitary Confinement Reform: We continue to educate ourselves on and advocate for efforts to reform the criminal justice system in Massachusetts.

Looking ahead:

Group 15 will continue regular monthly activities, including a focus on immigration, our new Individual at Risk case and, when Covid restrictions allow, outreach activities within Concord

and surrounding communities. We expect to continue joining with other human rights related groups and organizations, including First Parish Concord Immigration Justice Task Force and DIAS.

Diversity Committee

Author: Sara Ballard

Due to Covid, our committee did not meet in person this year, and our communications were mostly done via email. We have seven members and associate members.

We are in the process of redefining our purpose and rewriting our Mission Statement, as our primary focus has become the task of recharting our status as a Welcoming Congregation, which is now required by the UUA on a regular basis.

We submitted an application for the OUT Metro West organization to be a Share the Plate recipient next year, which was accepted.

We've been in contact with the new Congregational Life Committee, and expect to collaborate on some activities and initiatives.

We look forward to being able to meet in person, hopefully in the near future, when we can make an effort to invite some new members who want to help us work on our Welcoming Congregation rechartering process.

Environmental Team

Author: Gail Kharidia

Overview

As with other social action groups at First Parish in Concord, we dealt with COVID 19, the turmoil of the Trump election, maintaining our focus on bringing timely information to the congregation about climate change and how the congregation can make a difference, various environmental legislative initiatives and setting up the Greening the Campus Task Force.

Communications

The Environmental Team met monthly on zoom and stayed in contact throughout the year by email. Our Social Action Director Adrienne Betancourt kept us connected setting up the zoom links and informing us of activities in other Social Action groups and in UU. FP Weekly was a life saver for communicating with the congregation and promoting our events, such as the hosted webinar on "Zero Carbon Home". With the pandemic, the Team relied heavily on the internet and took advantage of the opportunity to expand web communications with the community. When hosting an education webinar, "Zero Carbon Home" for FP and the community, team members promoted the event to local organizations and offered co-sponsorships. This resulted in the creation of a contact list of local UU's and organizations which will be expanded.

Greening of the Campus Initiative

Moving at the speed of COVID, the Environmental Team took our cues from Reverend Dana and our standing committee liaison Peter Nobile and worked to build a broad based and representative steering committee for the Greening the Campus Task Force. Environmental Team members Peter Lowitt, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Ted Bayne, Kel Keleher, Michael McAteer, and Gail Kharidia helped get the committee off the ground, with its charter approved by the Standing Committee in the fall and its committee makeup in the spring, the Committee held its first meeting in April 2021. Tim Whitney, Roselyn Romberg, Bruce Davidson, Regina Corrado, Holly Cratsley and Jen Izzo (invited), Standing Committee liaison Peter Nobile, and an invitation has been extended through Amy Freedman for a youth representative. The Task Force hopes to build off the work of the Environmental Team and the generous anonymous gifts the Parish received to initiate a project to insulate the Sanctuary over the summer and hire a mechanical engineering consultant to draft specification for a campus wide energy project.

Legislative Initiatives

The team worked to keep the congregation informed about state climate change legislation and how they might impact its passage through coordinated lobbying, (Adrienne Betancourt kept us informed of UUA and UU MassAction opportunities) and team members participated in meetings with other UU Congregations in the region to track Climate Change legislation and share information on programing in their communities and congregations. Massachusetts legislature passed Climate Change legislation and overrode Governor Baker's veto this winter in an important victory for our Commonwealth and the Planet.

Climate and Environmental Justice Activities at FP

Besides the two initiatives above, \$60K or more in anonymous donations to date was raised for Greening the Campus, much of it coming from ET members who are committed to this project. Jim Snyder-Grant submitted an individual nomination to Share the Plate for a Boston area grass roots group, Alternatives for the Community and Environment (ACE), whose goals align with our environmental and racial justice missions. This organization received large support from our members. Religious Exploration under the direction of Rev. Amy Freedman held many climate and nature programs, including Earth Day and Connecting with Animals Programs for Family RE Connect and a nature program for the Coming of Age youth. In addition, ET members participated individually in activities associated with the Reclaim Our Democracy Group, specifically, "Get out the Vote" and "the Environment Voter Project", and Bradley Hubbard-Nelson lit the Social Action Candle in support of Environmental Justice this past Spring.

Climate and Environmental Justice Activities Beyond FP

The pandemic and restrictions for gathering at the church afforded the time and inclination to reach out more to the community, as mentioned above. The ET hosted a free webinar, "Zero Carbon Home", given live by consultant David Green. It was so popular, two webinars were held, with more than 50 attendees at the first and more than 20 at the second. Mr. Green presented fact-based information with charts and graphs, evidence from personal experience and cost estimates for reducing the carbon imprint of a home. Changes in heating systems, windows,

insulation and electric generation through solar panels were covered. He devoted 2 hours to answering individual questions and provided a free e-book copy of [Zero Carbon Home](#). Gail Kharidia organized the event and Bradley Hubbard-Nelson was webinar host. Members contacted local organizations and newsletters to publicize the event, providing the opportunity to start a local resource list of organizations, media and contacts beyond FP. Some of these are Concord League of Women Voters, Concord Can, Concord Library Sustainability Committee and more. To further support community action, Bradley Hubbard-Nelson set up a website, “Cooler Concord”, which will be expanded next year.

Looking Ahead

As the ET approaches Fiscal 2021-2022, our Chair Peter Lowitt, stepped up to assume the role of Chair of the Greening the Campus Task Force and Gail Kharidia was elected the new chair at the May 2, 2021 task force meeting. Gail facilitated a Round Robin decision-making process and each person made one goal or initiative recommendation for the forthcoming year. Continuing around a second time, each member who wanted made a second recommendation. Altogether, 16 goals and initiatives were recommended. Some are large scale goals which will be addressed by sub-groups; others are small task goals which individuals will pursue. The members agreed to take action on the goals and initiatives they recommended. These were grouped into three categories: Education, Legislation and Advocacy and Personal Actions – actions FP and community members can take as individuals for our planet and the environment.

The importance of some additional directions were recognized: a) Increase ET Membership and provide opportunities for FP members to participate in Climate Change and Environmental Justice activities, even if not ET members, b) collaborate more with other FP Social Action Teams and Groups (Racial Justice, Immigration Justice, Reclaim our Democracy, Women’s Parish Association and Advocates for Women’s Empowerment c) deepen connections with national and regional UU organizations - UU for Social Action, UU Mass Acton, UU’s Create Climate Justice and UU Ministry for Earth - and other climate and environmental organizations and resources.

At the end of Fiscal 2020-2021, and as the Greening of the Campus task force is underway and we are moving past the pandemic, the ET is looking forward to new and expanded activities in Fiscal 2021-2021.

Immigration Justice Task Force

Author: Laurie Van Loon

The mission of the First Parish Immigration Justice Task Force (IJTF) is to support vulnerable migrants and to take action in response to immigration injustices in our country, and to educate ourselves and our fellow parishioners about this continuing crisis.

The IJTF is a First Parish Concord Social Action program launched in February 2017. Our regular meetings are the first Monday of each month; sometimes sub-committees meet at other

times. Meetings during this church year have all been via Zoom. The pandemic has not seemed to have affected our group's cohesion. Attendance averages 9-12 of our membership of over 20. Members are also involved in immigration justice related activities on their own, including many types of volunteering and activism. While we are invested in immigration policy impact and reform nation-wide, we focus primarily on the greater Boston area.

Primary contacts for the IJTF are Tony Rodriguez (trod.rodriguez@gmail.com), Laurie Van Loon (lvanloon11@gmail.com), and Regina Corrao--also our primary publicist (reginacorraoconsulting@gmail.com). Jane Blumberg manages our QRT postings (see description below).

Internal communication: A Google group, Facebook page, and frequent emails help keep our members connected with each other and informed.

Communication to the FP congregation: To engage the congregation we have leveraged First Parish's methods of communication, especially important in a pandemic with no in-person opportunities: notices of upcoming events in First Parish Weekly, and notices on the First Parish Facebook page as well as the Social Action area of the website, with the support of First Parish Social Action Manager Adrienne Betancourt. As immigration justice issues emerge, we attempt to make it easy for the congregation to know of and participate in IJTF's efforts and related activities.

This year we instituted the Quick Response Team, developed by and managed by Jane Blumberg, with input from others. The QRT is composed of FP members who wish to participate in immigration activism for matters that are urgent and quickly addressed. Anyone in the congregation is welcome to sign on. Currently 21 FP members receive QRT notices—over a dozen this year. Assessment of the program's success via a questionnaire to participants revealed a universally positive reaction, and frequent follow-through to take action.

Internal task force sharing: In addition to activities backed by the whole task force, over the years the IJTF has evolved into a clearinghouse for sharing individual interests and efforts related to immigration justice. By email and during meeting time, individuals and subgroups bring to the TF information about IJ-related events, policies, and opportunities for education, outreach, volunteering, and activism. These are at local, regional, national, and international levels. During the pandemic, this aspect of the TF has continued as before through an informal system of "point people" taking the lead in specific areas. For example, Rachel Wheeler sends us frequent information gathered from news sources and from Physicians for Human Rights.

Internal task force development: The IJTF again held a half day September retreat facilitated by Regina Corrao to look back on the previous year, refine our goals and actions going forward,

track initiatives and progress, and confirm which members have volunteered for specific actions or areas of attention. We have found this organizing structure helpful in managing such a multi-faceted mission. After reviewing the status of our existing goals this May, we will be refining our future focus over the summer and early fall.

Sanctuary Level 2 – Along with all the members of the Sanctuary Coalition of 10 congregations, our task force is delighted to report that in March our Sanctuary guest in Bedford, Maria Macario, was able to safely leave FP Bedford after three years of residency there. She has a legal “stay of deportation” for one year, allowing her to pursue legal alternatives to remaining permanently in the US if she chooses to do so. Congressman Seth Moulton was helpful in interceding on her behalf. A special zoom gathering to say farewell was organized by FP Bedford.

Over the course of her stay, we noted that Maria became a spokesperson for Sanctuary guests in the Boston area and part of a nation-wide advocacy group of Sanctuary residents. She appeared in videos and was interviewed for newspaper and radio.

IJTF is extremely grateful to Abby Buhle for her hundreds of hours of coordinating work with volunteers and direct service to Maria, to Tony Rodriguez for being a vital part of the FP Bedford core support team, and to all those from FP Concord who provided ESL tutoring, errands, resource procurement (ex, medical) and other needed services, support, and friendship. Support continues to Maria and her family, including to her eldest son who was deported to Guatemala, and to her other children in the Boston area.

In-church education and connections: A few connections with other FPC groups were made through attending others’ meetings or contacts with their reps, such as WPA, AWE, RJAG and ELT. Holli Jones-White presented information from the report from the UUA on the Committee on Institutional Change. Members from both IJTF and RJAG are joining in supporting the Boston area Ujima project, a ground-breaking community-controlled economic model.

Two TF members presented homilies at monthly FP Open Door services: Abby Buhle reflected on the deep meaning of her connection through the years with Sanctuary guest Maria, providing a history of her presence with us and of Maria’s own growth as an advocate. Laurie Van Loon reflected on transforming reactive energy against cruelty into justice work.

Jane Blumberg, working with RE Director Amy Freedman, developed a children’s message given by HS youth, framed as letters from a young migrant from Honduras.

Social Action Candle (at Sunday services): Tony celebrated our Sanctuary guest’s freedom. Nancy Kerr spoke about MISN/Casa (Metrowest Immigrant Support Network/Worker Center).

Laurie tied the STP for NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) to the mental health needs of immigrants.

Funding and donations: Our nomination of La Colaborativa in Chelsea was selected for the Share the Plate program for next year. Members of our TF have contributed to a fund to help our Sanctuary guest's family. Members of our TF have sent contributions to Centro Arte para la Paz and locally-based Dignity in Asylum. Multiple other organizations related to IJ have received donations from individuals.

Beyond-FP outreach and education: Thanks to the initiative of IJTF members Joyce Pulcini and Carl Proper, we sponsored a presentation on April 25 by Muzaffar Chishti of the Migration Policy Institute at NYU, moderated by Regina Corrao. A sub-committee of IJTF, with support from Adrienne Betancourt, and participation from Anne Englehart from Follen Church Lexington, held multiple meetings to organize and publicize this up-to-the-minute analysis of current immigration policy direction under President Biden. After learning of this coming event, the Concord-Carlisle League of Women voters asked to co-sponsor. Approximately 80 registrants zoomed in, and we sent a video of the presentation and other follow-up materials to the 130+ people who had originally registered.

Beyond-FP partnering and connections: Our task force member from Amnesty International has continued to provide important information and initiatives. A few of our meetings have been attended by people from other congregations. (Zoom has made this easier.) We again welcomed Laura Wagner from UU Mass Action to our meeting for a comprehensive update of issues for direct activism. The Concord-Carlisle League of Women Voters and Follen Church in Lexington co-sponsored our April presentation (see above). We will offer QRT listings to other congregations if they are interested in joining us.

A co-founder from DIAS and a lawyer from KIND gave comprehensive presentations at our regular group meetings. Task force member Jessica Bethoney, who has worked with IINE (International Institute of New England) described its mission.

Our members continue to connect to, volunteer with, and/or track the work of multiple organizations, local, regional, and national. Some of these are UU Mass Action, UU College of Social Justice, UU Service Committee, First Parish Bedford Sanctuary Coalition, MISN/Casa (Framingham), BIJAN, Dignity in Asylum, Centro Presente, MIRA (Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocate Coalition), the International Institute of New England, RIAN, De Novo, ACLU-MA, Kids in Need of Defense, Physicians for Human Rights, RAICES, and the American Friends Service Committee. Information from these sources often forms the basis for action, or for further education of our group. Our list of IJ-related organizations continues to grow.

Note: Our previous support of BIJAN lessened during the pandemic due to the impact of the coronavirus on its use of volunteers to provide accompaniment to court hearings, check-ins at ICE and other required appointments in Burlington. We expect this to change with gradual societal opening and continue to support fundraising for BIJAN to pay bonds and legal fees.

Under discussion is the potential value in additional joining with other UU SA groups which are focusing on immigration at a national level.

Lobbying and related activism: Legislative activism this year, as in the last, has focused on the Safe Communities Act, and the Family and Work Mobility bills, lobbying to ensure they are released from committee for votes on the floor. At the annual UU Mass Action Advocacy Day, members of IJTF and FPC trained and then lobbied virtually with many others for these and other pending legislative decisions. We joined other groups such as Indivisible and Reclaim Our Democracy in writing postcards and making phone calls to support justice efforts.

Covid-related activism: The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on immigrant communities. Hence our nomination of La Colaborativa in Chelsea for STP. We continued to lobby for the release of all detainees in light of health risks from the coronavirus, joining our voices with the ACLU and physicians' organizations. We continued to partner with Casa/MISN to increase food security in the Metrowest area.

Looking ahead: In the first half of this church year, cruel immigration policies and practices continued and were amplified under the previous administration, intensifying emergency conditions for arriving immigrants and refugees and fear among the undocumented. Under the new administration, policies are shifting extremely rapidly in more positive directions, but with a great many open questions and likely push-back. Our task force remains alert to how we might best adjust our goals and efforts. We will continue to strive to balance the three pillars of education (to ourselves and to the congregation), support to grassroots and other organizations, and activism for policy change. We will continue to explore collaborations with other FPC social action groups to underscore shared missions.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Van Loon

Racial Justice Action Group Annual Report

Author: Leslie Fisher

Leadership Team: Wendy Holt wendyh@dmahealth.com (through January 2021);
Leslie Fisher lesliefisher@treitman.com; Cindy Soule cindysoule@gmail.com

Annual Report submitted by Leslie Fisher, June 1, 2021

Participation

Number of people on RJAG Google Group mailing list: 56

Number of people attending some or most monthly meetings: 10-15

Share the Plate

The September Share the Plate was RJAG-sponsored Black Ballot Project (a project of the Union of Minority Neighborhoods in Jamaica Plain) and featured a Sunday service presentation by their Executive Director, Horace Small. \$3,218 was raised for the non-profit.

UU the Vote

Throughout the fall, leading up to the elections of 2020, RJAG members focused on coordinating, promoting, and engaging in non-partisan work via postcarding, letter writing, texting, and phone banking to citizens - mostly people of color - in states where voter suppression is greatest. Several members were part of FPC's UU the Vote Steering Committee and at least 76 First Parishioners and their friends participated..

Beloved Conversations Virtual

Wendy Holt promoted and facilitated the fall program enrollment when 19 First Parishioners participated in the 6 small group sessions and 3 worship services for white lay people. One staff member participated in a parallel program for white religious professionals. Adrienne Betacnourt and Liz Weber facilitated the spring program enrollment of 23 people, which included 6 staff and 7 people who had taken a Beloved Conversations workshop previously.

Jamaica Drive

RJAG again assisted Jennifer Burgess to gather and ship tools and other resources, which she conveyed to and distributed in the community of Carawina, Jamaica in October 2020.

UUUM

Several RJAG members attended a September Zoom information and brainstorming meeting with UUUM staff about their initiative to increase awareness of Roxbury's Black artists beyond their community. The link to UUUM's new Artist Directory was provided to the RJAG Google Group and FP Weekly prior to the end-of-year holidays. Leslie Fisher worked with Beth Norton and UUUM to develop a June Zoom event with Roxbury artists (see **Events** below).

UU Mass Action

Several members of RJAG participated in the December 10 Advocacy Day Zoom meetings with Tami Gouveia to hear about, express support for, and ask how we could help move forward several social justice priority bills that were awaiting action before the end of the 2020 legislative

session. Information on follow up was provided to the RJAG Google Group. In February, 7 members of RJAG attended UU Mass Action's quarterly meeting of the Black Lives Matter Working Group. Some RJAG members also attended April 13 Advocacy Day with Tami Gouveia's aide, Emily Odgers and Mike Barrett's aides, Evie Hobbs and Dina Nathanson about current bills. In the fall we hope to meet with UU Mass Action to discuss priority bill selection for the next legislative session.

Antiracism Work in Concord

After some challenged the outcome of the November 2020 election, RJAG placed a letter to the editor in the Concord Journal calling for the need for national legislation to protect the right of all citizens to vote and be counted. Pat Brewer kept us apprised (and encouraged RJAG Concord residents to write in support) of the proposed establishment of a DEI position in the Concord schools, which was subsequently adopted. She is making connections between COAR (Communities Organized Against Racism) and FPC Religious Education. RJAG petitioned the Standing Committee to write the Concord Select Board in support of a League of Women Voters' request that the Town of Concord establish a DEI commission.

UUA Commission on Institutional Change

Several members of RJAG are serving on the Widening the Circle of Concern committee and/or have attended workshops on the 8th Principle.

Events

"Voter Suppression: An Online Interview with Ray Arsenault," hosted by Kerem Shalom, was co-sponsored and promoted by RJAG & ROD, January 10.

"Healing Embodied Racism." Dana Snyder-Grant, CC King, Jiffy Read, and Liz Weber facilitated a series of monthly workshops and weekly practice sessions, based on Resmaa Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands*. Started in January; ended May 1. FPC participants – 15

"Deeper Than The Skin" (music & storytelling event on January 30) was facilitated by Cindy Soule with other UU congregations in Stow/Acton, Littleton, Harvard, the Greater Littleton Interfaith Council and the Maynard Anti-Racism Alliance. Attendees - 357

"Concord Conversation with Fania Davis," 2021 Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies, April 11. Several RJAG members (Marilyn, CC, Sally) facilitated the event, which was co-sponsored with WPA. Attendees - 88

"Ancestral Homeland: Journey to Transformative Narratives - A Conversation with Artists", June 6, 7-8:30. Zoom event co-sponsored with the Music Ministry and hosted by UUUM with Roxbury's Christle Rawlins-Jackson, poet and singer, and Gloretta Baynes, multimedia artist. Attendees - 41

Reclaim Our Democracy

Author: Fred Van Deusen

Our group was formed in 2014 when the Denominational Affairs Committee at First Parish embraced the UUA Congregational Study Action Issue of **Escalating Inequality**. We sponsored activities in 2014 and 2015 that led to the formation of the Americans for Economic Fairness group in May of 2015. We learned that the issues surrounding escalating inequality are complex, intertwined, systemic and deeply rooted in our culture. The most compelling issue that the group identified was the impact of escalating inequality on our democracy.

In June of 2016 the UUA adopted a new Congregational Study Action Issue **The Corruption of Our Democracy** which was focused on the negative influence that huge amounts of money from corporations, billionaires, and special interest groups has on our national elections and on the effectiveness of congress. This issue fit in well with our previous work and we began focusing on it in September of 2016. We adopted a new name and created a new mission statement.

***Reclaim Our Democracy** is an inclusive, collaborative, multi-partisan movement. Our goal is to reclaim our democratic rights as citizens of the United States of America to have a government that truly represents and supports the needs and desires of all people.*

We currently have 16 people on our planning team and about 300 people on our mailing list. Fred Van Deusen is the current leader of the group.

We continued to meet via Zoom throughout the year in spite of the pandemic. The focus of our activities from July, 2020 through November, 2020 was on the UU the Vote program. The intent of the nationwide UU the Vote initiative was for UU's to help get out the vote for the 2020 elections. It was grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith and [Fifth Principle](#) that supports the use of the democratic process in our society, as well as in our congregations.

At FPC members of our Reclaim Our Democracy team joined with Social Action Manager Adrienne Betancourt and members of the Racial Justice Action Group to form a 9-member steering committee for the First Parish UU the Vote program. It was the major focus for FP social justice during this period. Our two goals were to:

- 1) Involve as many members of the congregation as we can**
- 2) Have an impact on the 2020 election that reflects our values as Unitarian Universalists**

We partnered with Concord Indivisible, a local group started by First Parish members.

We kicked off our fall effort on September 10 with a Zoom event featuring inspiring UUSJ UU the Vote organizer Kelsey Cowger. During the event we asked attendees to complete a survey to select actions they were interested in taking as part of the program. We then supported and promoted a number of weekly actions including at various times:

- a) Encouraging members and their friends and families to register to vote
- b) Watching voter education films
- c) Participating in bi-weekly Concord Indivisible "huddles"

- d) Sending [Reclaim Our Vote](#) postcards with registration information to residents of selected states
- e) Taking part in a variety of family friendly activities including a Religious Exploration class on voting
- f) Participating in the Ask Your College campaign to encourage student voting
- g) Text banking with various organizations in different states
- h) Phone banking organized by the UUA UU the Vote and other groups
- i) Providing financial support to the UU the Vote program and to other groups fighting voter suppression
- j) Helping out at the polls
- k) Preparing for a potential coup

In the end the work we did not only increased voter turnout, mitigated voter suppression, and defended democracy, but also forged alliances with community-based justice partners, casting a bright light on UUs living their values. We motivated families, youth and kids to Get Out the Vote; supported UU the Vote from the pulpit; held a concert; wrote over 12,000 Reclaim Our Vote postcards to counter voter suppression in the South; sent 57,000+ texts to various key states; sent letters to many college presidents as part of the Ask Your College program; engaged hundreds in phone-banking calls; helped manage mail-in ballots; served as poll workers; pulled together new coalitions to respond to election-related concerns; and trained and signed up to be rally marshals.

At the national level UU's made over three million contacts with individuals throughout the country. It was a very successful program and we certainly did our part.

After the UU the Vote work was completed, in December we reassembled the whole Reclaim Our Democracy group for monthly Zoom meetings and did the following:

- Continued to develop and promote our educational website called ReclaimOurDemocracy.org that has attracted approximately 75,000 visitors from around the world, and our [Reclaim Our Democracy Facebook Group](#)
- Published a bi-monthly newsletter with information about events we are sponsoring and other events of interest
- Collaborated with the Environmental Action and Immigration Justice teams on the UU's for Social Justice (UUSJ) Write Here! Write Now! monthly letter writing to members of Congress
- Created actions in support of HR 1/S 1 – For the People Act
- Participated in UU Mass Action lobbying days
- Held a facilitated session to develop a Democracy System Chart to help us better understand the various components of the democracy system and how they interact with each other
- With Don Miller's help we organized and planned a June Ranked Choice Voting event
- Started planning events for the fall

We are currently working directly with a number of non-profit organizations that are also working to reclaim our democracy including UU Mass Action, UU's for Social Justice, League of Women Voters Concord-Carlisle, American Promise, and Concord Indivisible.

For more information, email Fred Van Deusen at fredvandeu@gmail.com or visit our website: <http://reclaimourdemocracy.org/> or our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ReclaimOurDemocracy/>. All are welcome to join our mailing list and attend our events.

Women's Parish Association's Social Action Activities in Brief

Author of larger WPA Report: Janet Bailey

In fiscal year 2020-2021, the Women's Parish Association was well-represented in our Parish's social action offerings. The WPA sponsored Open Table for Share the Plate, and WPA Co-Chair, Janet Bailey, was one of the two Share the Plate speakers at Sunday service on behalf of the non-profit in October. The WPA provides ongoing funds and volunteer services to Open Table, which addresses food insecurity. On January 19, the WPA co-sponsored, with the Environmental Team, a webinar by David Green about achieving a Zero Carbon Footprint Home. Participants learned how to reduce their heating bills, electric bills, and use of fossil fuels. The WPA sponsored and participated in the annual World Day of Prayer Concord Commemoration on March 5th. Participants prayed and stood in solidarity with the People of Vanuatu in their struggles to survive the negative impacts of climate change. A March 19th, zoom Tea Talk program, by Paul Angellini, discussed tea and its impact on human life, work and economies. Alongside the Racial Justice Action Group, the WPA co-sponsored a zoom conversation with Dr. Fania Davis, National Voice for Criminal Justice Reform, on April 11th. Fania Davis, this year's UMass Lowell Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies, discussed restorative justice and its potential to mitigate harsh prison sentencing, offer alternatives to the "school to prison pipeline" and allow for compassionate accountability for all involved in the criminal justice system. She discussed how restorative justice relates to racial and immigrant justice, human rights and women's rights. Finally, the WPA presented a May 14 zoom author talk by Barbara Berenson which highlighted her latest book "Massachusetts in the Woman Suffrage Movement."

Committee Reports

Standing Committee Annual Report of the Chair

Peter Nobile
2020-2021

It is difficult to believe that a year ago today we were only three months into the COVID-19 shutdown and still five months away from a truly frightening national election. One of the many effects from the church being partially and then fully closed, aside from the halting of live worship services, was that all Standing Committee (SC) meetings over the past year were held online. Using the Church's Zoom platform, we did our best to continue in a spirit of collaboration while acknowledging the significant challenges and losses that resulted from enforced distancing from one another. Our online meetings began with the lighting of a chalice and a prayer, and we reminded each other that all who serve our church do so as a part of a spiritual journey. Our church leaders – both lay and professional – serve with grace.

This past year reminded us that the heart of our faith community truly is the congregation – not just the physical space and what accomplishments or legacy we may inherit, but the friendships, mutual support, and bonds of love we create and that hold us together, even when – maybe especially when – we are stretched to the limit.

More specifically, the SC continues to be extremely proud of the congregation's activities and efforts to stay connected during the pandemic through numerous social action/social witness, musical, religious education, and pastoral care activities and networks – the list is too long for this short report. The First Parish calendar is full of meetings, concerts, caregiving, and other opportunities, and we expect that to continue unabated this coming year.

Significant events from the SC perspective since June of 2020 included:

- **June 2020** – the SC prepared a press release on the murder of George Floyd.
- **July 2020** – First Parish formally hired Facilities Manager Bruce Davidson, and along with many other UU churches, and with the expert help and guidance of Jane Barnes and Fifi Ball we submitted for and were granted a Payroll Protection Plan loan from the Federal Government which helped carry our financial obligations over the past year. The SC received a report from our General Assembly delegates regarding the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change (COIC) and how it will impact First Parish.
- **August 2020** – we bid a very fond farewell to our longtime and beloved sexton Doug Baker, and we are glad to know that he and Diana will still be living nearby in Concord in their retirement.
- **September 2020** – we welcomed our Ministerial Intern for the year, Jade Sylvan. Under Fred van Deusen's leadership the church rallied behind UU The Vote efforts, and with Howard the SC organized an appropriate response to the activities of an anti-democratic hate group that attempted to provoke a reaction from us, which the Chair is happy to report we did not give them. The SC voted to extend display of our Black Lives Matter banner for another six months.

- **October 2020** – The SC formally established a Greening the First Parish Campus task force and adopted its charter. The SC also held a half-day Zoom retreat focusing on leadership and the creation of new 2-year goals. Beth Norton gave us a Pillar report on music and worship, noting the challenges with maintaining the music community online.
- **November 2020** – all eyes were on the Presidential election, and our staff did outstanding pastoral care work holding us in a range of emotional states from outrage to tearful relief. We emerged with a sense of narrowly averted disaster which, in good UU fashion, had many of us picking ourselves up, dusting off, and getting right back to the hard work of making our fragile democracy more fair, freer, and truly accessible. We enjoyed a Pillar report on pastoral care from Rev. Liz Weber who continued to be fully engaged with numerous congregants.
- **December 2020** – The SC received a presentation from the group helping to form our Commission on Institutional Change appropriately called the Laying the Groundwork committee, who will engage the community in helping First Parish transform itself into a place of both anti-oppression and radical welcome.
- **January 2021** – The church appraised its artwork and furniture, some of which is quite valuable, as we begin efforts to look at the interior of our building through the eyes of others. The SC adopted new two-year goals, which can be summarized as follows:
 1. Taking a fresh look at our governance structure
 2. Strengthening our community and improving communications
 3. Developing long-term stewardship and fundraising strategies
- **February 2021** – we discussed membership and fundraising challenges, and voted again to continue displaying our BLM banner at the front porch.
- **March 2021** – the pastoral care load continued at about twice what it was the previous year, and our ministerial staff of Howard, Liz and Jade supported parishioners dealing with isolation and loneliness, struggling children, job losses, and deaths. The strains of the pandemic continued to grow. We enjoyed a religious education Pillar report from Rev. Amy Freedman, who briefed us on the challenges to maintaining connections to children in an online world.
- **April 2021** – the 40-year-old meeting house roof was replaced mainly for insurance reasons. We enjoyed a social action Pillar update and discussion with Social Action Manager Adrienne Betancourt. The newly minted the Congregational Life Committee (CLC) began meeting with Jan Power as chair, and the group managed (with a few truly heroic volunteers) to deliver a small bunch of daffodils to almost every First Parish member within an hour's drive – several hundred households – with cards sent to all others, as a beautiful gesture of community outreach.
- **May 2021** – the Laying the Groundwork group continued to reach out to other groups in the church. The Greening the First Parish Campus task force continues its work.

A financial report is available elsewhere, but a few notable highlights include:

- Receipt of a pledge of \$75,000 in Historic Preservation funding from the Town of Concord Community Preservation Committee toward restoration of our bell tower. Special thanks go to Holly Cratsley and others for shepherding that effort.
- A successful pledge campaign that met our goal, with once again an amazing team of lay and staff leaders doing the hard work of raising money to support our coming year's operations.

We are forever grateful for the dedicated service of our staff during these very trying times, and we wish for them peace of mind and a deep, restful break over the summer. The SC is also thankful to Kate Svrcek, Jeff Brainerd, and Peter Nobile, all completing six years of service, to Jane Barnes for two years of service as our Treasurer, and to Laurel Doggett who served this year as Standing Committee Clerk.

The best measures of our congregation are the loving bonds we nurture with each other, the enduring strength we draw from our fellowship, and our willingness to be vulnerable. May we continue to live out our benediction every day and to learn, to act out of humility, to listen well to each other, and to grow in our faith together.

Bouillon Committee Annual Report

Chair: Richard Keleher – 978-944-2734 – kel@rkeleher.com

This committee is a virtual committee. It never has meetings. We communicate via email. We solicit volunteers in the late fall and January and February if necessary, and then, with whatever help we have, serve bouillon on as many January, February, and March Sundays as possible.

This year we were not able to serve bouillon at all (there were no in-person church services, due to COVID-19).

Conchords Annual Report

The Conchords are a six-person mixed a cappella vocal ensemble based out of First Parish in Concord. All six are choir members.

Because COVID-19 closed our preferred rehearsal space (First Parish) and our performance venues (mostly assisted-living facilities), the Conchords suspended activities during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. We look forward to resuming our music-making during the fiscal year ahead and would be grateful for the opportunity to sing together at First Parish in rehearsal, in worship, and in service to the wider community.

Congregational Life Committee Annual Report

The Congregational Life Committee (CLC) was created on the recommendation of the Belonging Team Task Force's October 2020 report to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee appointed Jan Power as the chair of the CLC, and additional members were then recruited from general announcements to the congregation.

The CLC formed in April 2021 and will have met three times between its formation and the end of June 2021. The committee adopted the following mission statement:

The Congregational Life Committee promotes and nurtures an experience of belonging and a strong sense of connected community at First Parish. The committee aspires to embody the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and collaboration while fostering a culture of radical welcome.

In addition to attending to current congregational needs that arise, the CLC is charged with implementing the recommendations for promoting a sense of belonging at First Parish that were identified in the Belonging Team's October report.

In March, when the committee was still forming, 3 members of the committee and 7 other

volunteers delivered small bunches of daffodils to approximately 450 households belonging to First Parish members and friends. The purpose of this delivery was to 1) let the First Parish community know there was a new Congregational Life Committee, 2) let the First Parish community know they were being thought of by the CLC, and 3) deliver some spring cheer during the pandemic.

In May, members of the CLC began working on plans for (re-)establishing a more deliberate and comprehensive welcome process for newcomers to the church. Additionally, committee members helped facilitate First Parish's community conversation sessions held in June.

Committee members: Jan Power (chair), Lillian Anderson, Sara Ballard, Teresa Hubscher-Younger, Berni Jenkins, Liz Rust, Susan See, Lauren Treitman, Sophie Wadsworth

The CLC can be reached at clc@firstparish.org.

Facilities Advisory and Research Group Annual Report

Chair: Richard Keleher – 978-944-2734 – kel@rkeleher.com

This committee is a virtual committee. It did not meet in 2021, either live or virtually. This committee needs to be re-formed as an advisory committee to the Facilities Manager. Peter Nobile, Chair of the Standing Committee is working on this.

Ferry Beach Committee Annual Report

Our annual Ferry Beach Retreat would have normally been held over Memorial Day Weekend, May 28-31, 2021 at the Ferry Beach Camp & Conference Center in Saco, Maine. Due to continuing safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic at the time that planning would have needed to begin, the retreat leaders from both our congregation and First Parish in Lexington determined that we could not in good conscience offer an official church retreat this year. However, Ferry Beach offered to reserve that weekend for folks from our two congregations to book spending the weekend there directly through their office, so there would be individuals and families just from our two congregations, depending on their own comfort level with doing so and the numbers and safety restrictions required by Ferry Beach and the state of Maine. There was no organizing or planning on the part of the committee, other than our usual planning chairs for each congregation publicizing the offer from Ferry Beach in our respective parish news outlets. Those who attended were there on their own, but with the added benefit of having others from our congregations there at the same time.

As it turned out, 66 people attended, with 55 from First Parish in Concord and 11 from First Parish in Lexington. There were 12 children and youth ages 7-17 and 13 young adults ages 18

through 30. We even had two households who were first time “Beachers” this year! The weather was quite cold and rainy, but there were dry periods when folks braved the wind for a brisk beach walk or explored various nearby attractions such as a waterfall, bogg, or LLBean. Many participants had brought games and puzzles in preparation for time inside and had fun playing those together while others read in front of the fire. There were indeed no planned activities as in a normal year, but everyone seemed to find plenty to do. Most of all, it was a time to re-connect with each other in person as things are re-opening, and indeed, many talked of enjoying that so much, but needing to adjust to being in such a large group! (We usually have over 200 people for our retreat weekend!)

We very much hope that we’ll be able to plan normally for our traditional style of Ferry Beach Retreat next year with our usual numbers and activities for the beloved annual event! But for this year’s group of “Beachers”

Darien Smith, chair for Concord, plans to continue in that role next year.

Respectfully submitted,
Darien Smith
June 1, 2021

Flower Committee Annual Report

OUR MISSION:

To provide – through flower arrangements in the Sanctuary – natural beauty and an outdoor connection for Sunday worship services. Through this flower ministry, we hope to create arrangements that are graceful, inspiring and of the moment in nature. In addition, we enjoy the communal spirit of arranging, sharing ideas and fellowship and decorating the Sanctuary together.

WHAT WE DO:

We create two large arrangements – one for each side of the pulpit – for every Sunday service. Frequently the flowers and other plant material come from local gardens. The flower committee also creates memorial arrangements donated by parishioners. We are also responsible for the two planters at the church entrance. Occasionally members do arrangements for other First Parish events or locations, but our focus is the Sunday service arrangements and the two planters.

We use no First Parish funds. Many of our flowers and other plant material comes from parishioners’ yards and gardens. For supplemental, purchased flowers, the Flower Committee raises money through our Holiday memorial poinsettia event and by arranging memorial flowers for a fee. We are committed to maintaining a green sanctuary, and compost all of our plant and flower materials, whenever possible using locally sourced flowers.

The committee meets the third Tuesday of September, January and May to plan arrangements for the following season.

WHO WE ARE:

Ellen Whitney chairs the Flower Committee. Committee members include Susan Ellsworth, Dinny McIntyre, Helen Stoddard, Donna Peterson, Joy Madden, Petra Betts, Jan Goddard-Taylor, Marty Wallace, Linda Reynolds, Faxon Green, Kathy Spang and Lea Delacour.

'20 – '21 HIGHLIGHTS:

In this different year, our activities were limited, but no less heartfelt.

- - as usual, we installed and maintained the planters in the front of the church
- - raised funds for flower purchases through the memorial poinsettia fundraiser
- - provided seasonal photos of church flower arrangements for First Parish weekly
- - coordinated the purchase of poinsettia and lilies for Pastoral Care
- - delivered a flower arranging Zoom presentation to the First Tuesday group in April
- - met by Zoom every couple of months for fellowship and mutual support

Thank you to Bruce Davidson and Bob Hoff for regularly watering the planters. We are also grateful to the Pastoral Care team, who spread the beauty and solace of flowers and plants throughout our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Whitney, Chair
First Parish Flower Committee

Greening the Campus Task Force Annual Report

Last June at annual meeting, the Church voted to take action to green its campus. Slowed by the uncertainties generated by dealing with the COVID pandemic, the Environmental Team worked to build a broad based and representative steering committee for the Greening the Campus Task Force. Peter Lowitt stepped down as chair of the Environmental Team and agreed to take that role in standing up the new Task Force, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Ted Bayne, Kel Keleher, Michael McAteer, and Gail Kharidia helped get the committee off the ground, with its charter approved by the Standing Committee in the fall and its committee makeup in the spring, the Committee held its first meeting in April, 2021. Tim Whitney, Roselyn Romberg, Bruce Davidson, Regina Corrao, Standing Committee liaison Peter Nobile, and an invitation has been extended through Amy Freedman for a youth representative as well as other committee members who hope to join as their schedule clears, Holly Cratsley, Dave Elwood and Jen Izzo. The Task Force hopes to build off the work of the Environmental Team and the generous anonymous gifts the Parish received to initiate a project to insulate the Sanctuary over the summer and hire a mechanical engineering consultant to draft specification for a campus wide energy project.

Specifications have been prepared and bids solicited for the insulation work and drafts prepared for the consultant services.

Humanist Council Annual Report

Submitted by Andrew Puchrik and Pamela Dritt

This Council formed in Jan 2012. It arose from a perceived need for greater recognition of Humanism within the Parish. Over the years it has actively helped keep alive both the Concord Area Humanists (CAH) and the Sunday Forum Committee.

The *Humanist Council* has continued through the years to help sustain both the CAH and the FP Sunday Forums, as needed, sometimes providing leadership and sometimes help in publicizing. The Humanist Council wishes to continue support of these groups.

Concord Area Humanists provides UU and FP outreach to Concord and nearby towns, primarily through our monthly programs. When the pandemic hit, CAH, like other organizations, moved to holding Zoom events. We have also established a YouTube channel where recordings of our events can be found. As part of our outreach we have been working with the Greater Boston Humanists and Greater Worcester Humanists organizations. We are affiliated with the American Humanists Association.

CAH holds monthly program events with expert speakers on the first Wednesday evening of the month, (except for a summer break). These have been held over Zoom because of the pandemic, but have been well attended and received. On October 28th, Dr. Mark Reimers spoke on “The Neuropsychology of Dogmatic Beliefs and Delusions.” On December 2, Dr. Robert Eisenstein spoke on “Black Holes and Gravity Waves.” On January 6, 2021, Dr Catherine Sanderson spoke on “Merely Bystanders: The Psychology of Courage and Inaction.” In February and March, Nate Ramsayer presented “Archeology and the land of the Bible” and “Applying Archeology to the Biblical Record.” On April 8 Dr. Mark Reimers presented “The Minds of Animals.” On May 5, Dr. Joseph Gerstein spoke on “The Fates of Indigenous Peoples”. We had from 30 to over 70 people attend these programs. We also had a joint Darwin’s birthday and Earth Day Program with other humanist organizations.^[1]_{SEP}

We have also established a YouTube channel where recordings of our events can be found.

The CAH, the Sunday Forum Committee, and The Humanist Council, now all need more members to sustain our efforts as we go into the future. Contact is Andy Puchrik puchrik@gmail.com.

Jewish Awareness Affinity Group Annual Report

Beyond exchanging emails on topics of mutual interest, the Jewish Awareness group has mostly been on hiatus through the pandemic 2020-21 church year. We met by Zoom a few times to discuss life in the pandemic, and around Thanksgiving, to discuss gratitude and the meaning of a Jewish Thanksgiving. When the church re-opens, the group will need to do an assessment of its status, going forward. We had begun to discuss forming a steering committee to organize the group's activities and will continue with such.

For FP annual report, 2020-21

Current contact info:

Dana Snyder-Grant, dana.snydergrant@gmail.com

Laura Bernstein, LNRB1943@gmail.com

Lillian Anderson, lillianand@comcast.net

Peter Mitchell, loistm@aol.com

Jhamtse Buddhist Group Annual Report

Leaders:

Wednesday morning group:

Bill Seaver bill.seaver@gmail.com

Thursday evening group:

Veronica Brandstrader vbrandst@gmail.com

Don Seckler seckler01@comcast.net

We are a group comprised of First Parish members and others interested in Buddhism who meet weekly for Buddhist meditation, study, and fellowship.

We have 8 to 10 regular participants on Wednesday morning, and generally between 6 and 8 on Thursday evening. In the “before times” we were grateful for the opportunity to meet in the beautiful First Parish chapel. Currently we meet weekly on Zoom.

Our numbers of participants have held, and even mildly increased, during the Zoom meeting period. This may be because email reminders of weekly meetings go to both active JBC members and alumni, and the pandemic may have reminded formerly regular members why these meetings have been meaningful to them. Both the Wednesday and Thursday meetings now regularly include participants who live out of state, or are traveling.

We generally begin our meetings with a few minutes of informal greeting followed by a period of silent meditation (30 minutes), and Buddhist prayer. Then we do teachings for the balance of the 90 minute meeting, with a brief concluding prayer.

Once per month we are fortunate to have “live” teachings by David Tucker of [Creative Wellsprings](#), an experienced local teacher and student of Buddhism. During other sessions our teaching consists of reading both “popular” and traditional Buddhist texts and discussing them within the group. Even the more experienced Buddhist students among us find that there is a great deal to learn from sharing with others.

We are always happy to have new participants, including people who don't have experience with meditation or Buddhism and just want to check it out. We are considering having one or more socially distanced Thursday evening meetings in Concord this summer (perhaps including walking meditation) that new people would be welcomed to join.

Moms Connection Group Annual Report

Leadership Contact Information: Jennifer Izzo (jenbizzo3@gmail.com) and Dana Lissy (dana.lissy@gmail.com)

First Parish Mom's Connection Group (formerly Mom's Night Out or MNO) is a group by and for First Parish moms to socialize, build a support network, and share resources and ideas about raising kids in an ever-changing world. Established under the guidance of the Women's Parish Association, the group helps moms connect and support each other as we navigate the Unitarian Universalist parenthood journey.

The Mom's Connection Group does not have regularly scheduled meetings. Instead, we typically plan activities throughout the year, depending upon current events and members' interests and availability. All FP moms are welcome.

The group was less active than usual in 2020–2021 due to the Covid pandemic and the need to social distance. The most notable activity this year was a series of outdoor yoga classes offered on the church grounds on Saturday mornings. This was a lovely way for moms to reconnect and recharge in a safe way.

Otherwise group activity has consisted of emails on topics such as finding help getting vaccine appointments, questions about Ferry Beach, and ideas for things to do on Mother's Day. With the state reopening and Covid restrictions being lifted, we plan to solicit ideas and opinions from the group on new ways to get together and/or connect with each other. We welcome ideas for activities. What is nice about the group is that anyone can organize an event.

We use a Google Group email distribution list to keep in touch, share information, solicit advice,

and promote upcoming events. There are currently 57 members on the list. To request to join, please email Dana Lissy at dana.lissy@gmail.com or Jennifer Izzo at jenbizzo3@gmail.com.

The Mom's Connection Group fulfills the strategic ends and mission of First Parish as follows:

- The group was founded under the guidance of the Women's Parish Association, a long-established group within First Parish that supports women, church needs, education, charity work, and social aspects of the church.
- Each of us is a part of the larger church community, integrated in worship, religious education, and social justice work.
- Our membership, while mostly mothers within the First Parish community, welcomes all to participate.
- Our support of First Parish moms is local in nature and in keeping with both our Unitarian Universalist faith and mothers' needs and well-being.

Pastoral Care Council Annual Report

Members of the Council this church year are: Mary Ann Barton, Enid Boasberg, Judy Dembsey, Sue Dobbie, Virginia Taylor and Fred Van Deusen. Lou Fackert left the committee.

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic and the church building closing, no activities or meetings of the Council were held. Liz Weber, Pastoral Care Minister suggested that we wait on performing our goals for Mission/Vision-2020-21. It may be that our goals will change as we return to in person meetings in the future.

Judy Dembsey
Chairperson

Partner Congregation Committee & Our Transylvanian Partnership Community Annual Report

Our First Parish **Transylvanian Partnership Community** fosters and promotes our rich and long-standing (since 1993) partnership with the Hungarian Unitarian community in Székelykeresztúr (pronounced “SAY-kehy-KEH-rehs-tour” - “Keresztúr”, for short, and called Cristuru Secuiesc by Romanians. Keresztúr is a majority ethnic Hungarian town of about 12,000 in the ethnic Hungarian minority region of Transylvania, Romania.

We support two distinct partnerships:

- one with the Keresztúr Hungarian Unitarian church (with over 2,000 members), and
- one with the Berde Mózes Unitárius Gimnázium (BMUG) in Keresztúr, one of the two Hungarian Unitarian schools in Romania, both having K - 12 classes.

Mission: The Transylvanian Partnership Community promotes, supports and enables the deepening of the relationships between our historic spiritual communities in Concord Massachusetts and Székelykeresztúr Transylvania.

Goals: To achieve our mission, we have established the overall “goals” for Connecting, Covenanting and Communicating between our communities, for which please refer to our web page: <http://firstparish.org/wp/connection/transylvanian-partnership/>

The Partner Congregation Committee (PCC) is the body which facilitates and coordinates the Transylvanian Partnership Community’s programs and activities in partnership with our counterparts in the congregation and the school in Keresztúr.

2020 - 21 PCC Members: Lillian Anderson and Tim Whitney (Co-Chairs), Beth Norton and Dawn Van Patten (Staff Liaisons), Darien Smith (Treasurer), Sara Ballard (Communications), Tim Whitney (Recording Secretary) Kathy Spang (Co-Chair, Student Scholarship Sub-committee), Dana Booth (Co-chair, Student Scholarship Sub-committee), Barbara Olson (Co-chair, Student Scholarship Sub-committee), Kathy Booth, Ellen Crompton, Marilyn and Peter Lowitt, Pat Brinkman, Peggy Claybrook, Bill Taylor and Rodger Matlage (Chair Emeritus).

Committee Meetings: The committee meets monthly to plan partnership activities and events, to manage the budget and finances of the partnership community, as well as, to oversee all other aspects of the partnership community. Meetings are open to all members of the congregation and we have been meeting regularly via Zoom. We did meet in person on the Keresztúr Terrace, socially distanced and masked on a lovely fall day in November. In December we held a Zoom meeting with our Keresztúr partners that included 25 people from both congregations. We had another combined Zoom meeting with members of both PCC’s in March to explore our next trip to Transylvania.

Contents: the remainder of this report contains the following:

- the Concord - Székelykeresztúr Scholarship Program
- the Pilgrimage Program
- other Activities and items:

Concord - Székelykeresztúr Scholarship Program

Starting with their first scholarship donation in 1996, Iván and Ursula Kristóffy initiated the scholarship program for students attending the Berde Mózes Unitárius Gimnázium (BMUG), one of the two Hungarian Unitarian K-12 school in Transylvania. Since then more than 150 donors, including First Parish families and individuals, our choir, youth group, Women's Parish Association and the members of the Massachusetts Hungarian community, have donated scholarships making it possible for more than 220 rural Hungarian minority students to receive a highly valued liberal Hungarian education, and thereby mitigating the Romanian government's cycle of oppression of the Hungarian Unitarian minority, and preserving their threatened heritage. Our scholarships make a liberal Unitarian high school education possible by offsetting a portion of qualified students' room and board expenses at BMUG, where a Scholarship Committee consisting of the high school principal, vice principal and teachers, identifies students who qualify for financial assistance based on a combination of academic achievement, motivation, community involvement and financial need.

In May 2017, the school, the Keresztúr Unitarian congregation, and the First Parish PCC agreed to rearrange the roles and operations for our Student Scholarship program. Specifically, at the Keresztúr congregation's request, we separated the scholarship program from the Keresztúr Congregation, thereby leaving the program solely between our Concord congregation and the school.

In Concord, the PCC formed a Scholarship Sub-committee co-chaired Kathy Spang, Dana Booth and Barbara Olson. The fundamentals of the program remain unchanged, but all activities are performed solely by people at the school in Keresztúr and at First Parish.

Our Scholarship Sub-Committee -This is our fifth year of having one or more Scholarship Coordinators for each class. The coordinator is responsible for contacting the donors who support the students in that class, for collecting donations from the class's donors, and for facilitating their student-donor communications throughout their high school years.

2020 - 2021 School Highlights:

- **Scholarships Awarded:** For the 2020 - 2021 academic year, fifty-eight students - forty at Berde Mózes Unitarian High School and eighteen in colleges and universities are supported with a total of \$26,800 in scholarships donated by sixty-eight donors (families/individuals, the Choir, and the Women's Parish Association, and members of the Mass. Hungarian community). The standard annual scholarship amount remained at \$400 per high school student and \$600 per college-level student.
- **Graduation:** We are immensely grateful to George Gagliardi for his work to make the graduation special for this year's graduates. Because of the pandemic, the school in Keresztúr had online learning for most of the year, and we cannot travel there to deliver a congratulatory speech. But George, being one of the scholarship donors of a graduating senior, wrote a congratulatory speech, which we sent to our school contact, Emese Nagy, who translated it, and it was used during their ceremony.
- Kathy Spang, in her role as co-chair of the scholarship sub-committee, contacted all the senior scholarship donors and asked them to send her cards with congratulatory messages

for their students as well as \$50 as a graduation gift for their student. The money (\$550 for eleven students) is being wired to the school through the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC).

Pilgrimage Program

Background: We strive, as a minimum, to have an every other year adult/multi-generational pilgrimage on a quadrennial cycle, sending a group pilgrimage to Keresztúr every four years and a Keresztúr delegation coming to Concord every four years, offset by two years. Recent pilgrimage history:

- A Keresztúr delegation came to Concord in 2016
- In 2018 we sent a multi-generational delegation of 27: 19 adults plus 7 youth and children for 10 days;
- In 2019 a 25 member delegation came to Concord, including the folk dance Várdrozsák with their Lelkes Band and Keresztúri church members.
- In the summer of 2020 Simone Tricca and Anna Whitney were to spend several weeks in Keresztúr, but this visit was canceled due to Covid.

Future Planning: Concord and Keresztúr have continued conversations and planning for travel after the Covid crisis:

- In November, 2020 the PCC and church staff including Howard, Beth, Amy, and Dawn, met to focus on initial thinking on what and when the next trip could be. It was agreed the earliest would be a Concord delegation traveling there in the summer of 2022, pending the situation with Covid. Ideas for the type of trip included:
 - o Importance of multi-generational participation (introducing new Concord families to the experience);
 - o More shared experiences and interactions with Keresztúris;
 - o Using arts and other activities as shared experiences: dance, music, cooking, crafts, etc.
- In March, 2021 Concord and Keresztúr had a Zoom meeting to discuss initial ideas about a Concord visit in the summer of 2022. We are now awaiting ideas from Keresztúr about the best times of the year to visit in 2022 from their end. We will work closely with Dawn and other staff to see what dates work best for FP families. This fall of 2021 we plan to finalize the dates and general theme with Keresztúr for this 2022 visit, and begin active planning.

Other Activities and items:

- **UUPCC membership:** It has been our long-term goal to be able to support the work of the UUPCC at their \$600 **Supporting Congregation Membership** category for congregations with over 150 members. This year, thanks to the First Parish budget item, we were able to continue that support.

- **Christmas Eve collections:** \$4,000 from First Parish's 2019 Christmas Eve collections (one half of the total), was designated for the work of our partner congregation in Keresztúr and was wired to them in January. This compares with the \$4,003.50 donated and sent the previous year from the Christmas 2017 collections.
- **WPA Donation:** First Parish's Women's Parish Association donated \$100 to the Woman's Association of the Unitarian Church in Keresztúr. This continues a long-standing tradition for our WPA. Their women's association has yet to decide where to apply this donation.
- **Steward of Partnership Award:** Kathy and Dana Booth were chosen to be a 2021 recipient of a Steward of Partnership Award by the UUPCC. This award is given annually to recognize those who provide exceptional care for their own congregation's partnerships.
- **Iván and Ursula Kristóffy Memorial Fund.** Sadly we note the passing of Iván Kristóffy on February 23, 2021. Iván and Ursula, were beloved members of First Parish. They helped establish our congregation's partnership and were responsible for the creation of our scholarship program. We have renamed this Memorial Fund to include Iván and contributions continue to be received.
- **Scholarship Donors Celebration Event:** On February 27 fifty-nine people attended a celebration of our scholarship donors via Zoom. Our program included the Rev. Gary Smith, Rev. Howard Dana, songs led by Beth Norton, testimonials from donors - Dana Booth, Doug Hardy, Roselyn Romberg, Alec Walker - videos from students who have gratefully received their scholarships, as well as a history of the scholarship program from Rodger Mattlage and Kathy Spang.

Respectfully submitted,

Lillian Anderson and Tim Whitney, Co - Chairs (lillianand@comcast.net)

Partner Congregation Committee

Photography Club Annual Report

Our Photo Club Mission Statement:

“The First Parish Photography Club serves to encourage its members to learn and grow while enjoying their practice of photography. We strive to maintain a standard of activities and conduct in keeping with the mission and values of First Parish and the wider UU community”

Club Information

We are a non-competitive Club, open to First Parish adults at every level of skill and experience. We have approximately 35 registered club members, ranging from beginners to professionals. We meet monthly, except for July and August, on the second Saturday of the month. In spite of the COVID 19 pandemic we continued to hold our regular monthly meetings throughout the church year by using Zoom. We were unable to conduct our in-person Annual Exhibit this year, but we did compile our annual slideshow that we viewed at our May meeting.

The Club's Funding comes from member contributions of \$2.00 per person per meeting. This is used to pay for Club expenses and to reimburse First Parish for meeting room usage. As we did not meet in person at all in the past year, these fees were not collected, nor was a donation made to First Parish for meeting room usage.

Content: We generally have two-three interactive presentations each month by club members, and sometimes professional photographers, on a variety of photographic topics. We have tutorials to learn about various photography techniques; themes where we ask members to take photos about a particular theme; and slideshows that members prepare and show.

Tutorials: Creating a Multi-media Show with Photos, Video Clips, and Music. What is a Travelogue? Our Recent Work, Pierre and Gaby Chiha. Using Zoom for a Slideshow

Themes: Macro Photography; Spots and Stripes; Review and Select October Farm Calendar Pictures; Same But Different; Members' Favorite Photos; Nature and Spring; Looking Up, Looking Down

Slideshows: Cuba, Part 2 and Part 3; China Adoption Trip; Canada: Coast and the Banff National Park; Croatia; Winter Photos and Holiday Lights; Sailing from NYC to Virgin Gorda, BVI; Myanmar; London at Night; Annual FP Photo Club Slideshow; Multi-media shows: Nashoba Valley Photo Club Year in Review; Concord Protest May 31, 2020

Field Trips: We did not schedule any field trips this year

Report submitted by [Kathleen Elcox](#) and [Fred Van Deusen](#) (Co-Directors)

Spanish-Speakers Affinity Group Annual Report

In past years, around 8-10 First Parishioners have usually been present at this pot luck supper traditionally held in members' homes, on the third Thursday of each month, with Spanish the language of communication. This year our group continued meeting in most months, by Zoom. Our September meeting was held outdoors, distanced and precautions. Our subsequent Zoom gatherings were a bit shorter. We plan to hold our May meeting as an in-person pot luck get-together outdoors.

In this well-established group, some current (2020-21) regulars are Martha Soper, Lorena Kavande, Alec Walker, Caitlin Selle, Tony Rodríguez, Janet Donovan, Laurie Van Loon, Brooks Stevens, Nancy Kerr, Richard Warren, Jessica Bethony and Rachel Wheeler. (Others have attended too.) The atmosphere is welcoming and informal, with an occasional more structured event. We share ideas related to travel, music, food, politics, social justice and more. We include people from outside FP whom we think might enjoy joining us, when one of us identifies them and runs it by the group. Currently we have four people from outside FP who sometimes join us.

Fluency is not required; though conversation is conducted in Spanish, someone is always willing to translate.

Mission Statement:

We are an informal social group for people in our congregation who speak Spanish or want to speak it better. Our goals are:

- to encourage and embrace the use of Spanish as a first or second language
- to explore topics and experiences related to the Spanish-speaking world.
- to share fellowship.

Liaison:

Laurie Van Loon

lvloon11@gmail.com

978-505-5614

Steeple Painting Committee Annual Report

Annual Report of the Steeple Painting Committee

May 24, 2021

Chair: Richard Keleher – 978-944-2734 – kel@rkeleher.com

This mission of this committee is:









Complete:

1. To assess the need for repainting the outside of the Steeple, the Front Porch, and the exterior walls of the Sanctuary.
2. To determine if engineering services are necessary.
3. To create specifications and a request for proposals to do whatever scope is deemed necessary.
4. To solicit price(s) for doing the work (being done by Bruce Davidson, Facilities Manager).
5. To submit a request for a grant from the Town of Concord's Community Preservation Committee.
6. To determine how to raise the funds to do whatever has been deemed necessary.

To Be Done: It remains to be seen if Bruce will need this help from us. The work of this committee may be complete.

7. To review the work in progress.
8. To advise regarding final payment.

The members of the group were:

 Barry Copp	barrycopp@comcast.net
 Doug Baker	dbaker@firstparish.org
 Gib Metcalf	gibmetcalf@gmail.com
 Holly Cratsley	holly@nasharch.com
 Melissa Gallo	mperduegallo@gmail.com
 Peter Nobile	peter.nobile@gmail.com
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 Roselyn Romberg	roselyn.romberg@gmail.com

Transcendentalism Council Annual Report

About us: The Transcendentalism Council offers opportunities to learn about the Transcendentalists and their contributions to the intellectual, spiritual, and philosophical life of Concord and First Parish. We are committed to the study and preservation of the rich heritage of our congregation. We sponsor lectures, exhibits, performances, classes, tours, and maintain a Facebook page. Our mission includes community outreach and collaboration with the Concord historical community. Our mailing list: approx. 200 people; active members: 4 or more; all welcome.

Report of activities for 2020-21 (all online due to COVID restrictions):

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

Richard Smith and Rob Velella

Singular Characters: Thoreau and Hawthorne

Living history performers Richard Smith and Rob Velella used the original words of Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne to explore the authors' relationship with each other and with their contemporaries like Alcott and Emerson.

57 Registrations

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

Phyllis Cole

Margaret Fuller and the American Women's Movement

Transcendentalist scholar Prof. Phyllis Cole lectured on pioneering feminist Margaret Fuller.

72 Registrations

Saturday, October 17, 2020

Jared Hardesty

Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds

Dr. Jared Hardesty spoke about his book *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds*, examining the history of enslavement in colonial New England.

169 Registrations, free event offered as part of the Concord Festival of Authors

Sunday, January 10, 2021

Rev. Jim Sherblom

White Supremacy in Concord: The Beginnings of First Parish

Jim Sherblom shared his research on how First Parish culturally related to indigenous and black lives in our first 250 years of existence.

46 Registrations

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Ray Raphael

April, 1775: No Great Surprise

Ray Raphael told the dramatic story of the cascade of events in Massachusetts between the Boston Tea Party in 1773 and the "shot heard 'round the world" in 1775.

40 Registrations

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Shelley Hawks and Richard Higgins

Hawthorne and Thoreau: Paths to Preservation in the Woods

Shelley Hawks and Richard Higgins examined the beauty and power of nature in the works of Hawthorne and Thoreau.

65 Registrations

Monday, May 10, 2021

Richard Smith and Catherine Mägi

Is My Verse Alive? Letters of Thomas Wentworth Higginson & Emily Dickinson

Historians Richard Smith and Catherine Mägi brought the words of Higginson and Dickinson to life as they read their letters as a conversation between the two.

45 Registrations

Sunday, June 6, 2021

Robert Gross

A Community in Ferment: The Transcendentalists and Concord's First Parish

An interview with Prof. Robert Gross in which he draws on his new book, *The Transcendentalists and Their World*, to describe First Parish's place on the front lines of the religious and political upheaval that swept Concord and the nation two centuries ago. (Registration still open at the time of this report)

Respectfully submitted, Victor Curran, Shelley Hawks, Jim Sherblom, Dianne Weiss

Steering Committee of the Transcendentalism Council of First Parish in Concord

Shelley Hawks: Shelley_Hawks@msn.com

Dianne Weiss: diannemcweiss@comcast.net

Victor Curran: vacurran@comcast.net

Jim Sherblom: jimsherblom@gmail.com

Women's A.M./P.M. Book Group

The Women's Book Group began as a monthly morning book discussion group in the fall of 1992, started by Margaret Stewart, who was then the First Parish church administrator as well as a church member. The group was an instant success and within a few years, an evening session was added due to popular demand. The AM/PM format continues and draws a regular core to each session, along with those who drop in occasionally. Women are invited to attend either or both discussions in any given month, and there is no need to sign up. The group is open to all women of First Parish and friends they wish to invite.

2020-2021 was the 29th year of the Book Group and was again a year of good discussions about eight chosen books, both fiction and nonfiction. Darien Smith again facilitated the morning group and Siri Smedvig the evening group. The evening sessions were held on Mondays and the morning sessions on Tuesdays. Due to the pandemic, all discussions were held via Zoom, and generally 8-12 participants.

Our founder, Margaret Stewart, who now lives in Arizona, was able to be a regular participant this year due to meeting on Zoom and we had a few other participants who no longer live in the area as well.

The books read are drawn from contemporary fiction and nonfiction to classics and occasionally poetry. Of particular note this year were the novels *The Rent Collector* and *Disappearing Earth*, along with *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.

Books are chosen in June of each year at a single event for both the morning and evening groups and will be via Zoom this year. Books are suggested and voted on, followed by the facilitators and Margaret Stewart reviewing the tally to make the final decisions, only going below the top eight choices on occasion to help make the list a good balance of fiction, nonfiction, genre, and topics.

The recommendation guidelines are that books should meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

- have women authors **or**
- pertain to women's issues **or**
- include strong character development **or**
- strong spiritual content.
(i.e. male authors are fine if the book fits one of the other categories)
- **All** should have good potential for great discussion and have been previously read by the recommender or one other book group participant.

This year we read: (F is for Fiction, NF for Nonfiction)

Sept 28/29	<i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead</i> - F - Olga Tokarczuk, Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones
Oct 26/27	<i>Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants</i> - NF - Robin Wall Kimmerer
Dec 7/8	<i>Sourdough</i> , - F - Robin Sloan
Jan 25/26	<i>Unsheltered</i> - F - Barbara Kingsolver
Feb 22/23	<i>Notorius RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg</i> - NF - Irin Carmon & Shana Knizhnik
Mar 29/30	<i>Disappearing Earth</i> - F - Julia Phillips
Apr 26/27	<i>The Rent Collector</i> - F - Camron Wright
May 24/25	<i>A Long Petal of the Sea</i> - F - Isabel Allende

The Women's AM/PM Book Group looks forward to its 30th year in 2021-2022, and we hope to be able to meet in person, but will see if it can work for some to join by Zoom, if they can't be there physically.

Darien and Siri will be continuing as facilitators.

Respectfully submitted,

Darien Smith

May 17, 2021

Women's Parish Association

The Women's Parish Association has had a very successful year despite not being able to offer in-person events. We have managed to have a number of social and educational programs via Zoom. We have contributed significantly to our charities whose primary focus is on improving women's and families' lives even at a time when we have not been able to hold our normal fundraising activities due to the pandemic. We have also supported First Parish with our maintenance of the Ruth Johnson Garden and the Deborah Greeley Memorial Herb Garden. These gardens provide places of beauty and contemplation for those who visit them, and provide convenient and pleasant outdoor meeting places throughout the spring, summer and fall.

We welcome all First Parish members to become members of the Women's Parish Association and all First Parish congregants and their families are most welcome at all of our events. Our membership chairperson is Lois Whitney and she has recruited more than 125 members. We have increased our involvement with and support of social action initiatives and programs this past year and look forward to continued collaboration with various groups involved in social action. Marilyn Lowitt represents the WPA on the Social Action Committee and keeps our Board informed of ongoing events. We were particularly pleased to co-sponsor with the First Parish Environmental Action Team the extremely important and informative Webinar by David Green about achieving a zero-carbon footprint at home. Much of what was presented in that Webinar will enable home owners and public building owners to reach critical goals. We were also very pleased to sponsor Fania Davis, a nationally recognized civil rights lawyer and voice for criminal justice reform and this year's UMass Lowell Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies. Fania gave a very informative lecture about restorative justice and how it relates to racial and immigration justice, prison reform, human rights and women's rights.

While it has been difficult to not be able to meet in person, the Board has been able to stay active and connected through Zoom events. We initiated a monthly hour long informal chat time for members of the Board to stay connected with each other and provide moral support and general camaraderie during the challenges presented by Covid-19.

I want to send a thank you to the WPA Board which includes Vice-President, Carolyn Shohet; Treasurers, Lauren Evans and Carol Boris; Recording Secretary, Irmi Doane; Corresponding Secretary, Lois Suarez; Program Chair, Dian Pekin; Membership Chair, Lois Whitney; Social Action Committee Representative, Marilyn Lowitt; Linda Benua; Linda Reynolds; Pricilla Smith; Karen Sullivan; and Melita Teichert. I am also very happy to welcome new Board Members, Deb Allen, Ellen Crompton, Mary King, and Susan Page. They have all made our year a very productive and interesting time.

I would like to give a special thank you to Carolyn Shohet who is retiring from the Board at the end of this year. She has made much needed contributions to the Board and she is famous for her cooking, catnip balls, continuous volunteering and her kindness and encouraging words and deeds. We also thank Kitsy Rothermel for her years of service on the WPA Board and especially her work as Corresponding Secretary. We look forward to seeing both Carolyn and Kitsy at future WPA programs when we are all able to gather again in person!

While this has been an unusual year, I have enjoyed being President and am thrilled that the WPA was able to accomplish so much for First Parish and the wider community. I would not have been successful without the amazing support of all the Board members.

I want to thank Senior Minister Reverend Howard Dana for his continued support and to welcome Bruce Davidson, our newly hired Facilities Manager, for all his help and to Doug Baker for all his years of supporting all the WPA's many events.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Bailey, President
The Women's Parish Association

WOMEN'S PARISH ASSOCIATION'S EVENTS FOR THE CHURCH YEAR OF 2020-2021

August 30, 2020 – Outdoor Parade of Gratitude for Doug Baker for 40 Year's of Outstanding Work for Our Beloved First Parish

Nature provided the perfect afternoon of comfortable breezes as parishioners and friends of all ages paraded by the front of the Meeting House in decorated automobiles, motor bikes, and bicycles to send Doug and Diana off to retirement with words and gifts of remembrance, gratitude and good wishes. Particularly memorable was the clever way Peter Nobile decorated his car with a colorful array of ties in memory of all of Doug's ties that provided for interesting conversations during decades of coffee hours! Doug and Diana are very grateful to all who made this event so enjoyable!

October 2020 – Share The Plate Sponsorship of Open Table throughout the month.

The WPA provides ongoing funds and volunteer services to Open Table, located in Maynard, MA. Its mission is to address hunger in our local community by providing healthy food in a welcoming environment that respects the dignity and diversity of those served. We were pleased to sponsor this well managed organization for October's Share The Plate Program and urge people to take advantage of the organization's many volunteer opportunities.

October 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom - WPA Annual Meeting

Covid-19 restrictions required us to hold our annual meeting via Zoom. The following reports were presented: Annual Report, Treasurer's Report including past and proposed budgets, Membership Report, Programs Report. The proposed budget was approved. The slate of officers and governing board members were presented and approved. A summary of all of First Parish's women's groups was presented. The 2020-2021 Officers were approved as follows: President – Janet Bailey; Vice-President – Carolyn Shohet; Treasurer- Lauren Evans; Recording Secretary – Irmi Doane; Corresponding Secretary – Lois Sarez. At-Large Board Members are the following: Deb Allen, Linda Benua, Carol Boris, Ellen Crompton, Mary King, Marilyn Lowitt, Susan Page, Dian Pekin (Program Chair), Linda Reynolds, Priscilla Smith, Karen Sullivan, Melita Teichert, Lois Whitney (Membership Chair).

The Program Report projected that 2020-2021 activities would be offered via Zoom until it was safe to hold in-person events. Given the the reduced income-producing events, it was expected that expenditures would be reduced appropriately.

November, 2020 Holiday Artisans Fair

Unfortunately, the 2020 Holiday Artisans Fair had to be completely cancelled due to Covid-19. We hope all the participating artists and artisans are able to continue creating and selling their wonderful handmade products and we look forward to future Holiday Artisans Fairs.

December 1 , 2020 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom – Joint Holiday Celebration With The First Tuesday Group

Covid-19 restrictions prevented our holding our annual holiday concert and lavish tea. However, Covid-19 restrictions did not dampen the spirits of attendees of our joint holiday celebration with the First Tuesday Group. Attendees had a chance to talk about how they survived their first pandemic Thanksgiving and to share favorite holiday memories prior to the pandemic. A wonderful slide show of winter scenes prepared by Bob Andrews and accompanied by recorded music (*Winter* from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*) put people in a festive mood as they enjoyed favorite holiday snacks.

January 19, 2021 – Co-sponsorship of and Participation in the First Parish Environmental Action Team’s Webinar by David Green About Achieving a Zero Carbon Footprint Home

In this webinar, people learned how to reduce their heating bills, electric bills, and carbon footprint to zero. David Green holds an honors degree in physics from Oxford University and an MBA with distinction from Harvard Business School. He founded and was CEO of two biotechnology companies which he took public in 2017. His technical and business expertise enabled him to achieve a zero carbon footprint home and provide valuable advice to other home owners. The WPA was very happy to be involved in this webinar offering and encourages everyone to participate in future webinars by David Green.

February, 2021 – Individual Members’ Participation in Various Social Action Activities.

Our WPA members work on a wide variety of social action projects of First Parish and in the wider community. Many future programs will be drawn from their experiences.

March 5, 2021 – 11:00 a.m.via Zoom. Sponsorship of and Participation in the World Day of Prayer Concord Commemoration. Celebration of the People of Vanuatu and Praying and Standing in Solidarity in Their Struggles To Survive the Negative Impacts of Climate Change.

Due to Covid-19, the Concord Area World Day of Prayer Committee held a reduced commemoration this year. The service was written by women of Vanuatu who shared stories of the devastating effects of climate change on the many islands of their country.

Informed prayers, prayerful action and thoughtful fundraising were all part of the commemoration and prayer service.

March 19, 2021 – 7:00 .m. via Zoom Tea Talk Program By Paul Angellini About the History, Culture, and Politics of the Cultivation, Processing and Worldwide Distribution of Tea.

Participants in this event enjoyed their favorite cups of tea while attending Paul Angellini’s slide presentation and discussion about the world’s favorite beverage and its impact on so many aspects of human life, work and economies. Many thanks to Paul for his well researched and informative program!

April 11, 2020 – 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. A Conversation with Dr. Fania Davis, National Voice for Criminal Justice Reform

Fania Davis is a nationally recognized civil rights lawyer and voice for criminal justice reform and is this year’s UMass Lowell Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies. She discussed restorative justice and its potential to mitigate harsh prison sentencing, offer alternatives to the “school to prison pipeline” and allow for compassionate accountability for all involved in the criminal justice system. She discussed how restorative justice relates to racial and immigrant justice,

human rights and women's rights. This event was sponsored by First Parish's Racial Justice Action Group and the Women's Parish Association with gratitude to the Greeley Scholar for Peace Program at UMass Lowell.

The WPA congratulates Fania for all her social justice work and thanks her for giving this lecture!

May 14, 2021, 7 p.m via Zoom. Author Talk by Barbara Berenson – Massachusetts and The Women's Suffrage Movement.

It took almost 8 decades for women to achieve the right to vote in Federal elections. The strategies, tactics and institutional frameworks used by Massachusetts women to secure the local and national right for women to vote were key success factors well worth noting and using in today's continuing struggles to achieving and maintaining a full and fair democracy. Barbara Berenson presented in a slide presentation and discussion highlights of her latest book "Massachusetts in the Woman Suffrage Movement". Attendees from First Parish and organizations dedicated to continue the important work of protecting our democracy received important information, advice and inspiration that will serve them all well. Attendees look forward to Barbara's next book!

June 10, 2021, 7 p.m. via Zoom. Slide Presentation and Demonstration of Gardening and Cooking with Herbs by Liz Barbour of Creative Feast.

Even though Covid-19 prevents us from holding our regular Herb Garden Party, the WPA will offer a great way for people to connect nicely with nature and realize the gifts that herbs provide as elements in a lovely cottage garden and many cuisines. Liz Barbour's program, "Gardening and Cooking with Herbs" is sure to give everyone interesting ideas and inspiring photographs. Liz produces an extensive variety of very popular programs related to gardening, cooking and artistic expression. This event will provide the perfect way to launch attendees' summer season and nourish their souls. First Parish's herb garden will be blooming again this summer and awaits your visit! So, do take advantage of this beautiful sanctuary!

Respectfully submitted,
Dian Pekin, Program Chair
The Women's Parish Association

UUA Certification Numbers

The following UUA Certification data was submitted by Fifi Ball in January 2021.

The data certified for First Parish in Concord is as follows:

UUA Certification Info

Members: 615
Average Attendance: 326-350
Pledge Income: \$1,040,163
Pledging Units: 402
RE Enrollment: 71
Total Expenditures: \$1,282,954
Non-Member/Affiliated UUs: 191

Officers and Deacons

Officers: 1 Year Terms:

Moderator: Kristin Moore

*Clerk: Laurel Doggett

*Treasurer: Jane Barnes

Standing Committee: 3 Year Terms

Peter Nobile, Chair

Liz Rust, Vice-Chair

Jeff Brainerd

Jim Hawks

CC King

Jim Reynolds

Susan See

Kate Svrcek

Virginia Taylor

*The Clerk and Treasurer also serve as members of the Standing Committee

Trustees of Parish Donations: 5 Year Terms

Laura Bernstein, second term ends 2022

Philip Vander Wilden, second term ends 2025

Roselyn Romberg, first term ends in 2024

John Boynton, first term ends in 2025

Patty Popov, first term ends in 2025

First Parish Deacons:

Rhoda Miller

Terry Rothermel

Kitsy Rothermel

Barbara Wheeler

Staff

Ministers:

Howard N. Dana, Senior Minister
Liz Weber, Pastoral Care Minister
Amy Freedman, Minister for Pastoral Care
Jade Sylvan, Ministerial Intern

Staff:

Fifi Ball, Director of Operations
Adrienne Betancourt, Social Action Manager
Tina Storey, Assistant to the Director of Operations
Dawn Van Patten, Assistant Director of Religious Education

Office Staff:

Sarah Burns, Church Administrator
Peggy Gallo, Volunteer Collector

Musicians:

Beth Norton, Director of Music
David Huston, Music Director Emeritus
Eric Huenneke, Organist
Anderson Manuel, Director, Youth Gospel Choir

Sextons and Facilities:

Bruce Davidson, Facilities Manager
Douglas Baker, Sexton & Curator (Retired August 31, 2020)
Barry Copp, Assistant Sexton
Bob Hoff, Assistant Sexton (Retired June 21, 2021)
Guy Ministeri, Assistant Sexton
Victor Curran, Assistant Sexton

Bylaws

BYLAWS First Parish in Concord Concord, Massachusetts

ARTICLE I Name (1956)

The name of this Parish shall be First Parish in Concord.

ARTICLE II Purpose (2012)

The purpose of this Parish is to be a welcoming congregation that seeks ways to deepen spiritually, build community, and make a positive difference in the world.

ARTICLE III Affiliation

This Parish shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association. (1956, 1968)

ARTICLE IV Membership

A. Any person shall become a member of the Parish when and by virtue of joining the First Parish Church in Concord, the members and names shall be kept in the records of the Minister and of the Clerk; and any person may become a member of the Parish by giving written consent which shall be deposited with and preserved by the Parish Clerk. (1856, 1894, 1946, 1956, 1976)

B. Any member of the Parish shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Parish held at least thirty days after the date of joining the First Parish Church in Concord, or First Parish in Concord. (1881, 1894, 1895, 1946, 1956, 1976, 1983)

C. The Parish Clerk shall prepare prior to each Parish meeting a full and true list of qualified voters of the Parish, and shall have such list at each meeting. (1858, 1881, 1894, 1946, 1956)

ARTICLE V
Officers

A. The officers of the Parish shall be nine Standing Committee members-at-large, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Moderator, and a Collector, all of whom shall be chosen at the Annual Meeting. The Standing Committee shall consist of these nine members-at-large, plus said Clerk and Treasurer.

The Clerk, Treasurer, Moderator, and Collector shall be elected each year for one-year terms, to serve until others are elected and qualified in their stead. The nine Standing Committee members-at-large shall be elected for three-year terms, to serve until others are qualified in their stead.

Candidates for Standing Committee members-at-large shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and may also be nominated from the floor at the Annual Meeting, and shall be elected by the Parish at the Annual Meeting. Standing Committee members-at-large so elected shall be eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of three years each.

Candidates for Clerk, Treasurer, Moderator and Collector shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee, may also be nominated from the floor at the Annual Meeting, and elected by the Parish at the Annual Meeting.

B. Mid-year or mid-term vacancies created by departing Standing Committee members-at-large shall be filled at the next Annual Meeting following the vacancy, according to the procedure set forth in Section A. Prior to the Annual Meeting, the Standing Committee may make provisional appointments necessitated by such vacancies. An appointee will serve in a provisional capacity until the next Annual Meeting, and if nominated by the Nominating Committee or from the floor at the Annual Meeting, he or she shall then be elected in the manner set forth in Section A. In calculating the maximum number of years Standing Committee members may serve, time served in a provisional capacity shall not be included. (1856, 1922, 1935, 1956, 1992, 1996)

C. The Standing Committee shall have general charge of the property of the Parish, except as specified in Article VII, the conduct of all its business affairs, and the control of its administration, including the appointment of such *ad hoc* committees as it may deem necessary. The permission of the Standing Committee shall be necessary for all meetings in the Meeting House other than those specified in Section B of Article VI. (1956)

D. The Standing Committee may fill vacancies among the officers listed in Section A of Article V. Any persons so appointed shall serve until the next Annual Meeting. The Standing Committee may, in consultation with the remaining members of any Parish committee, fill vacancies occurring in said committee. (1956)

E. All officers of the Parish shall be qualified voters of the Parish. (1956)

ARTICLE VI
The Ministers

A. The ministers shall be chosen, with the concurrence of the Church, by vote of the Parish at a meeting duly called. Their salary, and other conditions of employment by the Parish, shall be set forth in a written agreement, which shall be ratified by said meeting. The agreement shall contain provisions for its termination. A two-thirds vote at a duly called meeting of the Parish and the concurrence of the Church shall be necessary for the Parish to terminate said agreement in accordance with the terms thereof.

B. The Ministers shall be in charge of all religious services, including worship, marriages, baptisms, and funerals.

C. It shall be the duty of the Ministers to bring to the attention of the Standing Committee any matters which seem to them pertinent to the general interests of the Parish, and to make such recommendations as seem to them proper, but the final decisions in matters of policy and procedure shall remain with the Standing Committee or with legal meetings of the Parish.

D. The Ministers shall make a written report to the Annual Meeting of the parish. (1956, 1968)

ARTICLE VII
Trustees of Parish Donations

A. There shall be a committee of the Parish known as the Trustees of Parish Donations, to consist of five members who shall normally be elected by the parish for terms of five years, one to be so elected every year. Current Trustees shall serve the terms for which they have been elected. Not more than one new or reelected Trustee shall be chosen in any year (not including Trustees elected to fill vacancies caused by death, resignation or removal) or for other than a five- year term except for lesser terms needed for the filling of vacancies, or to secure an initial orderly sequence in the expiration of terms.

No person shall serve simultaneously as a Trustee and as a member of the Standing Committee or of a committee reporting to it except in a nonvoting liaison capacity. Nominations for election as a Trustee, however made, must first be approved by the Trustees in office at the time, not more than one Trustee being in dissent, and then ratified by the Standing Committee, each group voting separately, before becoming valid. Trustees elected under this bylaw shall not serve for more than two terms, consecutively, fractional terms of two years or less being disregarded. (1909, 1956, 1995)

B. A Trustee may be removed by a two-thirds vote by ballot at a meeting of the Parish duly called for the purpose and with the consent of the other Trustees and of at least two-thirds of the members of the Standing Committee. If a vacancy occurs by virtue of such removal, or by death, or by resignation delivered to the Clerk of the parish, such vacancy may be filled until the next annual Parish meeting by the appointment

of a successor to such Trustee, whose nomination has been approved and ratified as set forth in Section A above, by a majority vote of the other Trustees and the Standing Committee voting separately. At such next Annual Parish Meeting such vacancy shall be filled by the election by ballot of a successor who has been duly nominated as set forth in Section A above, for the remainder of the term of the retiring Trustee. (1909, 1956, 1995)

C. Said Trustees shall take, hold, manage and dispense through the proper officers or committees all property, real and personal, heretofore or hereafter devised, bequeathed or given to said Parish and voted by said parish to be so taken, held, managed and dispensed. No such vote shall be rescinded except by a two-thirds vote at a meeting of the Parish duly called for the purpose and with the consent of the Trustees in office at the time, not more than one Trustee being in dissent. (1909, 1956, 1995)

D. Said Trustees may invest and reinvest in the name of the Parish all such property real and personal, in such manner as they may deem safe and proper, and they shall have full authority to assign, transfer and convey all such property. (1909)

E. Said Trustees shall do all acts necessary or proper to be done for carrying into effect the provisions of this article and shall annually make a full report to the Parish of all their investments and of their doings in relation thereto. (1909)

F. This bylaw shall not be altered or amended except with the consent of the Trustees in office at the time, not more than one Trustee being in dissent, and by a two-thirds vote at a meeting of the Parish duly called for the purpose. (1909, 1956, 1995).

ARTICLE VIII Meetings

A. The Annual Meeting of the Parish shall be on a date and time determined each year by the Standing Committee, which date shall be within the first fifteen days of June. Other meetings may be called by the Standing Committee, or shall be called by the Standing Committee upon the written request of five or more qualified voters of the Parish. (1856, 1880, 1907, 1956, 1970, 1996)

B. Meetings of the Parish shall be called by the Standing Committee by posting up certified copies of the warrant in two public places in the town of Concord, one of which shall be at or near the door of the Meeting House of the Parish, for eight days at least and including two Sundays before the time of meeting, or they may be called at a shorter time, by giving personal notice to each of the qualified voters of the Parish, or by leaving a copy of the warrant at his last and usual place of abode. (1856)

C. Twenty-five qualified voters shall constitute a quorum. (1956)

ARTICLE IX
Fiscal Year (1981)

The fiscal year shall end on June 30.

ARTICLE X
Amendments (1956)

These bylaws, except as specifically noted previously, may be amended or repealed at any legal meeting of the Parish by a two-thirds vote. The wording of any proposed change shall be contained in the notice of the meeting.

Ministers Since the Church was Founded

Peter Bulkeley	1636 to 1659
John Jones	1636 to 1644
Edward Bulkeley	1659 to 1696
Joseph Estabrook	1667 to 1711
John Whiting	1712 to 1737
Daniel Bliss	1739 to 1764
William Emerson	1765 to 1776
Ezra Ripley	1778 to 1841
Hersey B. Goodwin, Associate	1830 to 1836
Barzillai Frost	1837 to 1857
Grindall Reynolds	1858 to 1894*
Benjamin R. Bulkeley	1882 to 1893**
Loren B. Macdonald	1895 to 1924
Johannes A.C. Fagginger Auer	1926 to 1930
Edward P. Daniels	1931 to 1956***
Robert D. Richardson, Interim	1956 to 1957
Arthur B. Jellis	1957 to 1970
Dana McLean Greeley	1970 to 1986
Patrick G. Green, Associate	1972 to 1977
James A. Robinson, Associate	1978 to 1982
Jon M. Luopa, Interim Assistant	1982 to 1983
Walter S. Jonas, Assistant	1983 to 1984
Alice B. Lane, Interim Assistant	1984 to 1986
Charles L. Wilson, Interim	1986 to 1988
Lucinda S. Duncan, MRE	1986 to 1988
Gary E. Smith	1988 to 2011****
Karen Lewis Deutsch, Interim Associate	1988 to 1990
Beth Graham, Associate	1990 to 1994
Nancy Dean-Franks, Interim Associate	1994 to 1995
Adele Smith-Penniman, Assistant	1995 to 1996
Rebecca M. Blodgett, Interim Assistant	1996 to 1997
Jenny M. Rankin, Associate	1997 to 2002
Rebecca M. Blodgett, Affiliate	1997 to
Jenny M. Rankin, Minister	2002 to 2012
Karen Lewis Foley, Associate	2002 to 2006
Ann S. Willever, MRE	2003 to 2005
Margie King Saphier, Associate	2006 to 2011
Elaine Beth Peresluha, Interim Senior Minister	2011 to 2013
Howard N. Dana, Senior Minister	2013
Margie King Saphier, Affiliate	2013
Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care	2014 to 2019
Amy Freedman, Minister for Religious Education	2015
Jo Von Rue, Youth Coordinator	2017 to 2018
Liz Weber, Minister for Pastoral Care	2019

* Honorary Pastor, 1881 to 1894

** Pastor Emeritus, 1924 to 1930

*** Minister Emeritus, 1956 to 1962

****Minister Emeritus, 2011

