

First Parish in Concord



The Standing Committee's Self- Evaluation

2015-16

June, 2016

STANDING COMMITTEE 2015-16 GOALS

Goal 1: Improve SC operational effectiveness

Executive Summary: The consensus is that we have made continued progress on improving operational effectiveness, meeting all but one of our goal's actions. We are following stated policies and an established calendar. Our roles under the church's governance model are clearer. We held two valuable retreats and worked well as a large group. We did not complete the action of forming a sub-group to review current practices.

Action- Continue to implement governance policies so that they become routine and sustainable.

There were many opportunities through the year to affirm the distinct roles of the SC and the SM. The SC's ongoing support for Rev Dana's function as the chief executive officer was the most important manifestation of this.

making ongoing progress

My experience is that the governance policy structure is clear to at least most stakeholders in the Parish.

Too many other important things to do.

We have worked to act within our governance policies, especially by managing the division of responsibilities between the Senior Minister and the SC.

I think the Standing Committee really owned its role setting and maintaining governance policies this year.

Best Practices list, Bylaw discussions and changes show continual progress.

Upcoming agenda items are better monitored than two or three years ago. Essential SC "required maintenance" occur at appropriate and proactive intervals (of course goals and evaluation, but also things like staff compensation review)

We really haven't addressed governance policies this year. There did not seem to be needed. The FC is working on the Finance Policies, but that is pretty independent of the SC.

Action- Form a governance sub-group and review current practices, continuing those that are valuable and eliminating those that are unnecessary.

I'm not sure who is in this subgroup (which does exist) and it probably has not had enough time to substantially review our practices yet.

Little progress on this.

Not sure what progress has been made here.

Subgroup formed; no activity

This work got started well. Next year we should review more policies with an eye for bringing them up to date.

Met to discuss practices/changes

Although the group was defined, I don't think it ever met

I considered starting policy review activities a few times throughout the year. However, I held off because I sensed that SC members, including me, were engaged in other important SC and/or FP activities.

Very effective at assigning people to special study groups or task forces to do our work. Also, assigning people to the various major committees and doing quick report outs are great. That keeps us connected with what is going on. Good job here.

Action- Hold 2 SC Retreats.

Would like more prep/ prioritizing before, for more relevant, productive time. Would also love if Howard participated more as a group member, rather than facilitator (on outside). Could envision retreat subcommittee, where members could take turns with sections.

Very valuable.

We held two wonderful retreats.

I think the off-site experience is valuable for trust-building, with the agenda almost secondary.

Done. Both served the dual goals of building community within the SC and addressing substantive issues.

Held two sessions and they were wonderful . They were not agenda heavy, which gave time for reflection and conversations. No decisions, just explorations. Very good sessions.

- **Indicator: SC work will be performed on schedule according to an established calendar.**

SC norms and practices have improved dramatically over the last few years both in efficacy and in nurturing respect and connectivity among SC members, yielding well-considered & insightful decision-making. The "Good Practices" document captures some of the baseline practices that have become operational norms, and indeed is an example of the energy and high level of efficacy that infuses SC operations.

This is a very high-functioning committee.

Calendar helpful. Keeps us on task. Agendas sent out 3-4 days in advance also helpful.

I wish we had followed the calendar a bit better, however we were really busy and I think it is important that this volunteer position remain manageable.

Done.

A subgroup of the SC developed an annual calendar during the summer, and maintained it throughout the year, refining as necessary along the way.

- **Indicator: Stated practices will match practices performed.**

I think we did what we said we would do.

Generally the practices followed are anticipated and accepted as routine, but I think some policies are due for an update.

Good Practices developed.

We maintained our "best practices" throughout the year. Once we have a governance subgroup in place, we will be better able to monitor our performance relative to operating procedures.

Done.

The SC was careful to consider whether its actions fell within (and therefore implemented) established governance.

- **Indicator: SC members will be productively working together in small and/or large groups.**

Leadership succession committee got outstanding cooperation from SC members.

Done.

Successful in some ways (Eval, Congregational Conversations subgroups), but not all. Could be better and more organized in leading active efforts. More sub-committee work would be helpful-- Auction, Ann. Campaign, Education/Training/Leadership?

Small group work has become one of our strengths. Leadership selection, evaluation, outreach, and other activities have all been successfully accomplished using this technique. The larger group is also high functioning and dynamic.

I think the Standing Committee was more successful in its small group work than it was, at times, in its monthly meetings. There were still times when functioning as a "committee of the whole" made SC meetings less productive and longer.

Mostly, but some subgroups were more productive than others... I also had the sense of more members working independently this year rather than groups.

- **Indicator: SC members will understand their roles.**

I think we do. I'm not sure there are many different roles. We do take the job of being a SC member very seriously, and know it is important. If there were questions, they came up at meetings.

This is a work in progress.

Done - or at least we're working on it.

This is an ongoing process. We are all learning about our roles as we do the work of the SC, individually and as a group.

Are we setting policy and envisioning the future of First Parish? I think we are doing that much less than becoming embroiled in operational issues. And we don't often speak as one voice.

We did.

Goal 2. Strengthen 2-way communications between SC and the congregation.

Executive Summary: We continue to strive to operate transparently. The committee's consensus is that we successfully met all but one indicator. SC members are visible, hold annual congregational discussions, and make themselves available to parishioners. Our communication to the congregation is regular and, for the most part, steady. Some feel we need to make our communication more meaningful.

Action- Make SC members more visible and available both individually and as a group.

Presence as greeters and at coffee hour. Membership on Parish committees. Participation in Annual Pledge.

I think we have been good about regular SC presence at coffee hour and at all manner of church events. I think congregants are aware that there are communication lines open, even if they are not aware of how the SC actually functions!

Visibility on Sunday morning and at individual meetings of groups and at events was quite good this year.

Coffee Hour presence is more visible; unclear about other areas.

Our presence greeting and at coffee hour has greatly improved our visibility and accessible. Not sure if we are more visible as a group. Probably the BLM banner was the most visible thing we did this year.

SC members have been actively involved in many activities in their formal roles and also as congregation members. Coffee hour and welcoming activities were routinely performed, and congregation members have begun to identify SC members as a regular feature at coffee hour and other events.

I believe the SC now has the trust of the congregation.

Coffee hour/ Greeter has added individual visibility. Group still invisible outside of meetings. Communication of one voice good.

The easel has made us individually more visible at coffee hour. As a group, perhaps from the rake and bake?? But perhaps not at all. I feel most congregants know at least one SC member, but many are surprised by others.

I don't know that I can say that we have been more available this year - but SC has certainly maintained a strong focus on availability, communication & outreach.

Doing the Sunday Service coffee sessions are great. They are relatively easy, and usually have 1 or 2 conversations. I think we are being very visible in a volunteer organization like FP.

Action- Hold and attend congregational discussions

Number of issue-specific "briefings" (e.g. on the budget) that are facilitated by SC members.

Though the attendance at each of these discussions consisted of members with well-worn issues, I think the SC can be rightly seen as open to feedback

But too few FP members attend to make these really useful.

There was not much interest in general discussions, but they were held, perhaps this is a sign of health, or perhaps it is a sign that we made need to reframe it.

Multiple sessions gave congregation members opportunities to speak about membership, stewardship, Black Lives Matter, etc.

Done.

We have held several. They seem to be well attended by the usual suspects.

Sub-committee did a great job organizing opportunities for conversations on focused topics. SC supported SAC conversations, although SC participation could've been better.

- **Indicator: Congregation members will recognize their ability to communicate with the SC in a meaningful way.**

By the directed comments that I received from parishioners because they know that I am on the SC, I think that people have recognized that they are being listened to and their opinions considered.

Not sure how to answer this. I think we are seen as very approachable.

We did our bit but that doesn't mean congregation members recognized their ability

Still think people are confused about how things work & get done, and how to have a voice.

We decided not to do a survey this year, and so we are lacking that tool for feedback on perceived ease of communication with Standing Committee. Anecdotally, however, I do have a strong sense that the congregation feels that the SC is available, and interested in understanding what members are thinking.

Many members do. We appear to be a welcome presence at outreach meetings, and do occasionally get approached on questions that people are concerned about.

Not sure this is widely understood, especially among newer members. Same as E11 (previous answer)-- We decided not to do a survey this year, and so we are lacking that tool for feedback on perceived ease of communication with Standing Committee. Anecdotally, however, I do have a strong sense that the congregation feels that the SC is available, and interested in understanding what members are thinking.

Positive feedback has been received about SC openness and availability.

I do think given the SAC process currently before us that not everyone understands the SC's role, and therefore might not know to approach one of us with a communication issue.

- **Indicator: Congregation and SC members will feel well-informed and heard.**

Newsletter, MHN, meeting minutes, etc. all provide info. Could always get better!

I think the congregation feels that they are generally listened to, especially when there are concerns.

Based on limited feedback

Same as above- I've long since given up believing that because something was said, it was heard. So cong members are heard, and are informed - and I'm sure some don't agree.

I have had many very good conversations with congregation members and with SC members and feel like I have a very good understanding of the high priority church activities such as stewardship, RE, etc. This has also been fed by the staff presentations provided by Howard at SC meetings.

see above

Mixed; some FP seem to have mis-information about some topics, like RE changes.

The SC and the BLM committee made strong efforts to listen to all aspects of the parish community's views on the BLM banner.

We are much better at transparency than we were last year at this time - for example, the BLM process has been extremely open.

Goal 3. Model healthy/ right relations in SC communications

Executive Summary: On the plus side we modeled kindness in our communication, both written and oral. We did not however make much progress on bringing “Right Relations” to the congregation, not moving beyond preliminary exploration of UUA resources on the topic.

Action- Find resources that will help us to educate ourselves and others on right relations.

We've passed around a couple of website ideas, but I think we need more facilitated and/or SC-mandated training.

found limited resources on the UUA website

There was an important investment made in two SC retreats this year, and they have been an excellent start in understanding & exploring SC's potential in spiritual leadership. This territory includes modeling kindness and respect, and helping to infuse same into relationships among congregational members and with staff.

MRP: SC members explored UUA resources available concerning right relations and also spoke with Sue Phillips of the New England region. Sue recommended consideration of a covenant. The topic was also discussed in our second retreat, where SC members decided to consider making kindness a theme during the next year.

Explored limited UUA resources. UUA options did not seem particularly well tailored to FP needs.

We did not make progress on this goal.

Research done, resources not good or worth using. Didn't explore other avenues. A training or more discussion would've been helpful for us to decide what was useful.

I don't think we've really done much about this as a group. Certain people (like Toby) have gone off to explore what was available. Not sure what the intent of this objective really is.

Action- Promote kindness in communications.

Hard to measure- Individually- yes?

I have heard nothing to the contrary.

We have been very consistent about being kind, expressing kindness, and listening. Mark is an awesome example of this - a role model for us all.

Same as E13- There was an important investment made in two SC retreats this year, and they have been an excellent start in understanding & exploring SC's potential in spiritual leadership. This territory includes modeling kindness and respect, and helping to infuse same into relationships among congregational members and with staff.

We continued communicating with kindness as we did last year, but I don't feel that we great on this point.

There was kindness in the conception of communications, and I believe that came through in the text.

SC members have worked to develop positive relationships with other First Parish individuals and groups. During conflict situations especially we have focused on considering the viewpoints of others. Black Lives Matter decision making was one example.

A real strength, especially around the disagreements regarding the Black Lives Matter banners.

Mark has been excellent at this.

Action- Work to bring workshops to First Parish, to raise awareness about right relations.

Toby looked into the availability of workshops, but there were none, so we made a conscious decision not to pursue. We did identify Sue Phillips as a resource should we decide to engage in development of a right relations covenant for the SC or for the congregation.

Not yet. (2)

The possibility explored, but we were disappointed by the possibilities

Perhaps we should eliminate this goal as unnecessary.

Little progress toward achieving workshops.

Have not done anything here that I'm aware of.

Research done. Didn't happen due to no resources? Could we create resources?

I think effort was put in but I don't think any workshops resulted.

- **Indicator: SC members will understand what is meant by “right relations”.**

Not much discussion on topic. Would've been good to put on agenda for an SC meeting.

We really have not discussed this. I don't think there is an acceptable "model" other than the description of what is "Good Practice."

Same as E13-- There was an important investment made in two SC retreats this year, and they have been an excellent start in understanding & exploring SC's potential in spiritual leadership. This territory includes modeling kindness and respect, and helping to infuse same into relationships among congregational members and with staff.

I think that we're vague on this.

We could use more clarification on this.

Our "right relations" investigations this year have helped me to understand and apply the concepts in my SC work and in my personal and professional life.

In our initial explorations I learned about this term and expect most other SC members did as well

I'm unclear on the concept.

See above comments about facilitated learning around this issue.

- **Indicator: Congregation members will recognize SC efforts to promote kindness in communications.**

We have made efforts to be kind, but I don't know if they would recognize this as being a special effort.

Can never know what they recognize.

Perhaps we should eliminate this goal as unnecessary.

Though we have done no formal outreach on kindness, I do think the caliber of communication within SC and between SC and congregation has infused more respect and kindness into congregational relations.

I have not heard any such recognition from the congregation. Congregants do recognize the volume and detail of communication.

I have received feedback from congregation members about the maturity of the Standing Committee as group, and the respectful way that we communicate with each other and with members of the congregation.

I don't think anyone would contradict the idea that we try to be kind, but I don't think they would think it is a priority.

See above.

- **Indicator: Congregation members will have participated in an introductory discussion on right relations.**

Not to my knowledge

We recognized early on that this topic would take time to implement and instead focused on improving knowledge of SC members. Direct congregational involvement was not attempted.

Perhaps we should eliminate this goal as unnecessary.

Not yet (2)

Not done.

I don't think we did this.

It would've been helpful as an agenda item for some discussion.

Goal 4. Function with a proactive outward vision

Executive Summary: The consensus is that we did not fully meet this goal through our indicators. We began work to increase a broad knowledge about comparisons between First Parish and other area churches regarding Social Action and finances, but there is still work to be done to learn more and educate the congregation about the relationship between First Parish and the UUA.

Action- Learn more about First Parish's place within our denomination.

We reached out to Sue Phillips of the UUA to learn more about issues of concern to the UUA. Topics include increasing congregational inter-communications, developing sense of stewardship, moving from district to regional support structure, etc.

We need to redouble our efforts along these lines; I (Peter) will make a special effort at arranging a tour of the UUA in the fall.

We are starting to get to this outward focused work. It will take some time to have this change of view sink into the culture of the Standing Committee and into the congregation. Might be a good goal to carry on into next year.

I feel Denominational affairs was talked about more, and we at least knew about the dissolving of the Mass Bay District and the nominations for UUA president. Still, our role was not really investigated.

We had some discussion of the issues going on in the Mass Bay District. Also I think Howard helped to raise our awareness of how we are viewed. Finally, the finance committee gave a very nice presentation which helped us understand how we compare with other similar churches from a financial standpoint.

Some initial research done on this.

We did some denominational outreach and work this year related to the potential dissolution of the Mass Bay District, but there is a great deal of potential in our denominational connections that we have yet to tap.

I don't think we've really reached out to this except for what David Ropeik has done for the Region.

Benchmark/SAC studies showed comparisons between FP and other churches. Next year, we should decide what we'd like to do with that info. How can it lead us forward (as part of a long term vision)?

Action- Reach out to the Denominational Affairs committee and our Senior Minister to discuss topics of interest.

Did this happen?

There seems to be a discussion when a discussion is needed. Don't know if we have really done much here.

See E19-- We did some denominational outreach and work this year related to the potential dissolution of the Mass Bay District, but there is a great deal of potential in our denominational connections that we have yet to tap.

Connection with the DAC has been tenuous.

We assigned a liaison to the Denominational Affairs committee, and tried to increase communications with this group. Results were mixed. More work should be done in this area. We tried to engage the DA committee early in discussions about the dissolution of the MB District. District Board Member David Ropeik was actively engaged with the SC, keeping us up to date on progress throughout the year.

I am aware that MRP has tried to reach out about certain topics without the conversations being fruitful.

I feel like these communications are done with no hesitation.

Action- Examine UUA website to identify high priority goals and objectives.

Not to my knowledge

Toby examined the UUA web site and created a site map for SC members. Mark reviewed the web site to identify areas of importance to the UUA, and confirmed these with Sue Phillips.

I appreciated Toby sending out an index of materials available on the website and feel that we were a bit more aware.

Not yet.

Not discussed.

Some people have, but I don't feel that I know what the UUA goals are and how what we are focused on is in alignment with or related to them at all.

Action- Organize a field trip to UUA.

We talked about this but to date have been unable to schedule.

Never organized.

Have not done this.

Still a worthwhile goal.

See above (ball in Peter's court).

- **Indicator: SC members will be able to discuss First Parish's role among UU congregations.**

I'm not sure who in the congregation understands this issue.

Both SAC and FinCom did surveys to show us where are practices fit in the wider world. Not necessarily UUA specific, but informative.

Benchmark/SAC studies started this process, as a comparative look at what we're doing, rather than our "role". Good question for next year- what is our role?

We have a greater understanding of our presence as a large church, but there is still work to be done. One of the UUA goals is to increase communications between congregations. We have much to share, and also to learn from the UU churches in our area.

See E19-- We did some denominational outreach and work this year related to the potential dissolution of the Mass Bay District, but there is a great deal of potential in our denominational connections that we have yet to tap.

I don't see where we have done anything here.

- **Indicator: Increased awareness will allow FP goals to be informed by the issues confronting the congregations of the UUA.**

Small subset is aware, but most don't know (or don't care?) about larger UUA issues. If this continues as a priority, we should look at why people should care, & how it affects them on a personal level.

See above-- I'm not sure who in the congregation understands this issue.

I don't see where we have done anything here.

See E-19-- We did some denominational outreach and work this year related to the potential dissolution of the Mass Bay District, but there is a great deal of potential in our denominational connections that we have yet to tap.

This year, there has been greater awareness of the need for First Parish to pay its "fair share" dues to the UUA. I anticipate that other UUA issues will be considered when we set our goals for next year.

Goal 5. Build a culture of stewardship

Executive Summary: Although most feel that we met our indicator of participating fully in giving activities at First Parish, consensus shows that we only partially succeeded in supporting increases in pledge numbers and amount. The group was split in measuring the success of supporting programs and operations; some feel we could do more work on this.

Action- Participate fully in the annual pledge campaign, auction planning and execution, and other activities that strengthen the culture of giving at First Parish.

Tom's leadership in the campaign was inspirational.

All SC members participated in stewardship activities this year. In particular the annual pledge campaign, the auction, but also in other supporting activities such as membership.

There seems to have been good participation.

Many SC members participated in Ann Campaign. All pledged (I think)! What could more active participation look like next year?

It was hard to manage both initiatives at once, but I think every SC member worked on at least one of these and many on both. More and more it is looking like our breadth may be too big for our reality and some tough restructuring may need to be considered in the near future.

Yes, everyone has been involved in this or in the Auction. Thank you!!!!

SC members have been visible as Stewards, and participants in the Annual Campaign. A variety of individual and collective SC contributions to the auction.

While the support of the Standing Committee was evident in the Annual Pledge Campaign, we still have a ways to go for the congregation to really own that it is their responsibility to fund the church and its programs. This is a many year process and we are making good headway. While we are still on a downward slide in members and giving, we are slowing the slide and may even be able to stop it.

- **Indicator: Number of pledges increases.**

Is the congregation shrinking? Or are people slow to respond...

Not exactly sure of the data, but my sense is that no new level was reached.

I believe the Annual Campaign was very well run this year, improving on last year's already very good work - and there was robust SC participation. It is disappointing that the excellent effort invested didn't yield more impact. I have to trust Howard when he says that we need to keep going and will build a culture of stewardship over several years. And we need to continue actively exploring how to connect with parishioners on financial support.

Will be able to report on this, but in general where a little ahead of last year in terms of number of pledgers. But, this is a challenge.

- **Indicator: Average pledge amount increases.**

Will report out on this. Data is coming in. Believe we have achieved this, but only by a little.

This must be the case as we have raised a similar amount as last year behind the power of less donors... however, there is a sense that more are trickling in, so it doesn't feel definitive to me, yet.

But not by much

See above-- Not exactly sure of the data, but my sense is that no new level was reached.

- **Indicator: SC and congregation members recognize the importance of supporting First Parish programs and operations.**

I am not sure if we are more aware, but certainly it is central to our understanding of parish life.

The annual pledge campaign was again very well organized by Tom and Howard. SC members were engaged early on, and additional congregation members joined the APC leadership and steward teams. Many congregation members pledged earlier than in previous years, and many increased pledges.

We do this a lot.

Need more participation of SC members within groups and at events.

More work to be done next year - I think there is still too much of a "silo" effect going on between RE, Social Action, Music and other parishioners' concerns.

There seems to be more awareness of importance of annual campaign and impact on budget.

Goal 6. Support our Senior Minister

Executive Summary: The consensus shows that we met this goal. The SC supported our Senior Minister with various activities, including the creation of a sub-group to support Howard, and liaisons to programs. Although we have had more open and supportive conversation within SC meetings, it was felt that it is important to continually strengthen this work.

Action- Continue to explore and develop ways we can support our Senior Minister in his programs and operational activities.

Still not sure if Howard is open to this. It still feels like a bit of an awkward struggle. I would like to see Howard increase ownership of programs (and openly encourage SC to support them), and less protective about operations, ultimately working together more as a team.

I think we have been very supportive of Howard, and that we are behind him and willing to take risks together.

We are supportive but we are also a check on the senior minister; we must maintain some perspective, so there is a balance between support and oversight.

We listen to Howard's concerns, ideas and challenges. I hope he feels that he is being supported by the group and by each individual on the SC.

I believe the relationship between SC and Howard is in good shape and growing better as time passes. Howard has expressed that he feels supported by the SC, and that we are working well in fulfilling our role in relationship to his role.

The subgroup to work with Howard seems like a useful tool, but was only called upon 2 times... not sure if it really was comfortable for Howard.

Good continued progress in this area.

Creation of support group for Howard. I am not sure how effective or useful that was.

In high priority areas such as social action, membership, RE, we made sure we had liaisons in place, and in several areas SC members were actively involved as volunteers. We also checked in periodically with Howard to ensure that he had enough expertise and support to accomplish his objectives.

The SC has supported professional staffing to support the SM.

Action- Create opportunities for the Senior Minister to communicate his needs.

We often ask "How are things going." Also, where there is a problem situation, we seem to address this quickly and effectively. I can think of several examples of this.

There were several opportunities for SC to hear depth from Howard this year. I believe SC is getting better at identifying and working with these opportunities to ensure that we seek out important information from Howard about FP and about his well-being in his role as senior minister.

Not sure what form this has taken or should take...maybe an SC member at the post-sermon chats, etc?

Unsure.

Both open and executive sessions of the SC give the SM an opportunity to review his needs.

Mark has been excellent at this. Perhaps it could be a more routine part of each meeting.

Are SC meetings a safe, comfortable format? Would be good to figure out & adjust (maybe a sub-committee?).

We provided regular reporting opportunities to Howard during our meetings and had periodic check-ins to make sure SC members and Howard were in sync. The SC chair was available to Howard throughout the year.

Very impressed with Mark checking on Howard during executive session.

Action- As needed, establish a working group to address specific support issues.

Creation of support group for Howard. I am not sure how effective or useful that was.

There is a Communications subgroup, but details of its activities were not made known (that I can recall), so hard to know if it was useful.

Committee was formed, but did not meet & discuss issues such as communication, openness, etc. to help him be better SM/leader.

Not sure how this group has been doing this year.

We do this a lot.

Not used often, but I think the working group provided a platform for Howard to candidly discuss some issues and allowed the SC to give honest feedback and troubleshooting in a more private setting.

A small SC group was established, consisting of Mark, Alec, and Kristin, to support Howard as needed.

Formed an SC working group to support Rev Dana as he requested it. Rev Dana expressed appreciation both to the members and to the SC generally.

- **Indicator: Senior Minister feels supported by SC.**

Unsure.

I think we do, but we need to ask him this question.

There were several opportunities for SC to hear depth from Howard this year. I believe SC is getting better at identifying and working with these opportunities to ensure that we seek out important information from Howard about FP and about his well-being in his role as senior minister.

I think that he does.

I think so.

Howard has expressed his satisfaction with the level of support he received from the SC.

According to his self evaluation, our relationship is productive and growing.

He indicates he does feel supported.

I think Howard feels like we back him up, and that he can be honest with us.

- **Indicator: The quality of conversations between the SC and Senior Minister will increase.**

Unsure about this one

This is a good committee and I think in general communications will improve.

Yes, I think we have very meaningful discussions, although the time is often at the end of the meeting and perhaps doesn't get enough air time or energy.

There were several opportunities for SC to hear depth from Howard this year. I believe SC is getting better at identifying and working with these opportunities to ensure that we seek out important information from Howard about FP and about his well-being in his role as senior minister.

There hasn't been a notable change here.

Transitions are in the past now. The conversation continues to focus on the needs and future of First Parish.

The quantity of conversation at our meetings makes it difficult for me to discern. Several times I have been pleased to note that Howard is saying something useful that I wouldn't have predicted he'd volunteer last year, which is good.

As trust has increased, conversations between Howard and SC members have become more direct and open during SC meetings.

Making steady progress here.

Additional Comments:

Executive Summary: We consider ourselves a high functioning group that works well together. It is felt that our list of “Good Practices” and indicators are helpful tools. Fewer goals with specific focus and measurements are desired for the upcoming year.

Many important goals met.

I would say we met most but not all of them. I don't know if the one's we didn't focus on really mattered. My only concern is that the meetings are very long. I'd like to explore ways to make them more efficient or shorter in duration. It is a big chunk of time and I'm pretty tired at the end.

From this perspective it seems there were too many goals; ok to take on more than we can accomplish but there seem to be too many spread over too many areas; suggest three for next year.

- 1) Could have more specific (measureable) indicators.
- 2) Could add goal sections as agenda items at SC meetings.
- 3) More discussion about goals/progress.
- 4) We should think more about reasons behind goals (how are they connected to vision, as well as our hopes for success?).

I think we met many of our goals - I just reread our "Good Practices" document and while there is always room for improvement I think, at the risk of repeating myself, that this is a high-functioning committee, that we have a pretty good understanding of the governance model, that we are not too introverted, that we weather crises relatively well, and that we are committed to following through on our goals.

I think we had too many goals and I think we should consider being more focused next year. Much like it has been fun to see the congregation rally behind BLM while maintaining other aspects of our church life, I think a rallying point would be useful for us with an intention of maintaining the other areas, more than aiming for significant growth in them. The indicators were very helpful and I liked this format for evaluation, it forced me to take time for each and every point discussed. Finally, among out "good practices" document, it has been brought to my attention very recently that our minutes are not up to date on the website... perhaps we need someone to own it more than having each member try and be in charge of their content...

I think the Standing Committee had ambitious goals and did a good job making progress on most of them. It is a well-functioning group that takes its work seriously. It is a pleasure to function as a team with the Standing Committee.

I think we made very good progress on our goals this year. We set reasonable goals and indicators. Things such as the Black Lives Matter movement arose and used some of our available time and energy. But all along, we kept our goals in mind and tried to integrate them into our work. I think the indicators were useful to me as I tried to measure our progress through the year and during the formal evaluation process. We were well supported by the evaluation subgroup with periodic check-ins during the year.