

First Parish in Needham

Unitarian Universalist

Annual Report 2021-22



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| WARRANT FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING..... | 5 |
| MINUTES OF THE 2020-21 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING | 6 |
| RITEs OF PASSAGE..... | 10 |
| PRESIDENT'S REPORT..... | 11 |
| MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT | 13 |
| MINISTERIAL INTERN'S REPORT..... | 17 |
| DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION'S REPORT | 21 |
| MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT..... | 23 |
| PARISH ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT | 25 |
| CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT FIRST PARISH IN NEEDHAM COMMUNITY DURING THE PANDEMIC | 28 |
| ACTION BOOK GROUP | 30 |
| ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE TEAM REPORT | 30 |
| ARCHIVES COMMITTEE..... | 31 |
| AUCTION COMMITTEE..... | 32 |
| COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY | 33 |
| COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE..... | 34 |
| CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE | 34 |
| DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) COMMITTEE | 35 |
| FRIENDS OF SOCIAL HOUR | 36 |
| GREEN CONGREGATION..... | 37 |
| THE HOMEGROWN COFFEEHOUSE | 38 |
| MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE | 39 |
| MEMORIAL FUND AND GARDEN COMMITTEE..... | 39 |
| MINISTERIAL INTERN COMMITTEE | 40 |
| PASTORAL CARE TEAM | 41 |
| PROGRAM COUNCIL..... | 42 |
| PROPERTY COMMITTEE..... | 43 |
| SAFE CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM..... | 44 |
| SMALL GROUP MINISTRY | 44 |
| SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE..... | 45 |
| WORSHIP COMMITTEE | 47 |
| FINANCE COMMITTEE..... | 49 |
| AUDITOR'S REPORT | 61 |
| TRUSTEES OF INVESTED FUNDS | 62 |

WARRANT FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

From: Leslie Nelken, Clerk of First Parish in Needham, Unitarian Universalist

Greetings. In the name of First Parish in Needham, Unitarian Universalist, you are hereby required to notify and warn the legal voters of said First Parish of a Congregational Meeting. We will meet in-person and via videoconferencing software to assemble on Sunday, May 15, 2022 at 12:00 noon then and there to act on the following articles, to wit:

ARTICLE I To hear reports from the President, the Ministers, and such others as have reports.

ARTICLE II To elect the following candidates put forward by the Nominating Committee as Officers and Representatives of the Parish for the upcoming church year. For 1-year terms: President, Vice President, Clerk, Treasurer and Auditor. For 3-year terms: Trustee of Invested Funds, Nominating Committee, and two members of Parish Committee.

| | |
|--|---|
| As President – Eliot Jekowsky (1 year) | As Vice President – Jen Packard (1 year) |
| As Treasurer – Joan Meccas (1 year) | As Clerk – Leslie Nelken (1 year) |
| As at-large member – Carol Alper (3 years) | As at-large member – David Berman (3 years) |

And to elect the following candidates for the listed positions:

For Nominating/LDC: Elise Coughlin (3 years)
 For Trustee of Invested Funds: Steve Goldberg (3 years)
 For Auditor: Chris Barbieri (1 year)

ARTICLE III To authorize the Parish Committee to appoint up to six delegates of First Parish to represent the church at the virtual 2022 UUA General Assembly.

ARTICLE IV To support adoption of the 8th Principle approved by Parish Committee, as follows:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

ARTICLE V To hear the report of the Treasurer and determine an operating budget for fiscal year 2022-2023.

ARTICLE VI To conduct such further business as is necessary.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this warrant, with your doing thereon, at the same time of said meeting. Given under our hands this 5th day of May, 2022.

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Eliot Jekowsky, President | Jen Packard, Vice President | Joan Meccas, Treasurer |
| Leslie Nelken, Clerk | Ann Barrett | Eva Jansiewicz |
| Vicky Makrides | Susan McGarvey | Peter Panov Dennis Ross-Degnan |

By virtue of the warrant, I have notified and warned the legal voters of First Parish in Needham, Unitarian Universalist, of the meeting called thereon by posting a copy of said warrant in newsletters and mailings on May 5, 2022, being at least ten (10) days before holding of the meeting and causing a notice of the meeting to be mailed to the last known address of every voting member of the Parish.

Attest: Leslie Nelken, Clerk

**MINUTES OF THE 2020-21 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
FIRST PARISH IN NEEDHAM, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST**

SUNDAY MAY 23, 2021 AT 12:00 NOON

The Annual Congregational meeting held on Sunday, May 23, 2021, via Zoom. We had 68 active Zoom windows, many of which had more than one member participating, hence surpassing the 38-membership quorum that was required.

ARTICLE I To hear reports from the President, the Minister, and such others as have reports.

I. Report from the President of the Congregation, Darren Zinner

This is our fourth congregational and second annual meeting run virtually, due to the pandemic. Our congregation has shown resilience. A full year of remote Sunday services, small groups, Lane Lyceums, and many other weekly events which helped to keep us connected. We did lose some families to moves and dear friends from deaths, and no new members, but the congregation has remained strong. The pledges this year show how strong we are, because they are nearly the same as last year, with only a few fewer members.

Three areas of focus: Our Staff, Our Building, and Our Community

Our Staff

Gratitude to Roberta in general for staying on a third year and solidifying our Religious Education program. We're very happy to welcome Sara-Elizabeth Dyer-Santa Cruz who will start with us in August. We sadly said good-bye to Irina Georgieva in the fall, who recorded hymns before she left. We welcomed Melissa Sky-Eagle at the beginning of 2021 with her great skills and connections. She is based in Texas, so we are now looking for a permanent music director to hopefully start in the fall. This person will also take over for Kate Loftus-Campe, assistant music director for children and youth, who has been our longest-term employee, starting with First Parish before Rev. Catie joined. We also said good-bye to our sexton Freddie Francis (Francis). Freddy Soto will take over Francis's responsibilities. Additionally, our Intern, Jenna Crawford has been here a year and I have yet to meet her in person. All of our wonderful staff have been amazing, including the ones who are staying with us: Rev. Catie, Susanna Whitman, Freddy and Tom Pugh. We are grateful.

Our Building

Work on steeple and roof has started. Town allocated \$50K for historical bell tower. The total budgeted cost is \$160K, leaving us to raise \$110K in a capital campaign. Property committee that if there is any excess funds raised we should use them for repair of the damaged sanctuary ceiling. The work is scheduled to be done by Labor Day. Still encouraging people to pledge because building is aging and it's difficult to budget major repairs. Boiler or kitchen overhaul away from a financial hole and any unused funds will go to building reserve fun.

Our Community

It's not clear yet, when we can join together again, however things are looking promising for opening in some capacity in September. We have established a Re-Opening Task Force led by Eliot Jekowsky and Dennis Ross-Degnan, which will look at when to open, how to open, vaccination and masking protocols. Also, we'll consider things that might stay, such as online plate collections, social hours and social groups.

II. Chalice Lighting – Words by John O’Donohue read by Rev. Catie.

III. Report from the Minister, Rev. Catie Scudera

This year has been marked by community bereavement all of us – dear friends and family of members and of the staff. Over 3 million people worldwide. The Rev. Sunshine Jeremiah Wolfe, writes about coming out of the pandemic, and that the residue of the trauma will congregations 5 to 10 years to heal. We all need to help in the recovery.

Our congregation has been resilient and for that I have tremendous gratitude. People attended online services, small groups, lyceums, youth programming, music rehearsals, on and on. People kept engaged and I’m proud to be your minister and looking forward to being in person again, when it is safe to do so.

Motion to accept the verbal and written reports as submitted.

Motion passes with one abstention.

ARTICLE II To elect the following candidates put forward by the Nominating Committee as Officers and Representatives of the Parish for the upcoming church year. For 1-year terms: President, Vice President, Clerk, Treasurer and Auditor. For 3-year terms: Trustee of Invested Funds, Nominating Committee, and two members of Parish Committee. For 2-year term: One member of Parish Committee.

As President – Eliot Jekowsky

As Vice President – Jen Packard

As Treasurer – Joan Meccas

As Clerk – Leslie Nelken

As at-large member – Eva Jansiewicz (3 years)

As at-large member – Vicky Makrides (3 years)

As at-large member – Peter Panov (2 years)

And to elect the following candidates for the listed positions:

For Nominating/LDC: Anna Berkenblit

For Trustee: Katie Barnett

For Auditor: Phil Griffith

Motion to accept the slate of candidates.

Motion passes with one abstention.

ARTICLE III To authorize the Parish Committee to appoint up to six delegates of First Parish to represent the church at the virtual 2021 UUA General Assembly.

Motion to authorize Parish Committee to appoint up to six delegates to represent First Parish at the 2021 UUA General Assembly.

Discussion Items:

1. Who pays the fees? Generally, the person pays themselves, however Parish Committee allocates \$600 per year to help reduce the fees. The UUA also have funds to help reduce fees.

2. Will the delegates report back to the community? In the past delegates have reported back by blog post, summer lay meeting, and other forums, with mixed results. The incoming president, Eliot Jekowsky, says that he'll add it to next fall's Parish Committee agenda.

Motion pass unanimously.

ARTICLE IV To hear the report of the Treasurer and determine an operating budget for fiscal year 2021 – 2022.

Report from our Treasurer, Erik Bailey

In summary these items were presented, questioned and discussed –

1. Erik reported that the current fiscal year (July 2020-June 2021) was far better than expected.
2. Questions and comments.
 - 2.1. Wasn't the PPP loan to pay for salaries?
 - 2.1.1. The PPP loan of \$60,000 helped us keep all of our employees and 99.99% sure that it will be forgivable.
 - 2.1.1.1. Last year we had intended to give raises to the staff but held off due to the pandemic. This year we will give them raises and bonuses.
 - 2.1.2. People were able to honor their last year pledges at a higher rate than expected.
 - 2.1.3. The mini-auction did far better than budgeted, that also helped with our income in the current fiscal year. (Thank you to Carolyn Lynes and Rana Mana-Doerfer!)
 - 2.1.4. We had budgeted conservatively due to the pandemic-led uncertainty, we now have a small surplus\cushion.
 - 2.2. Parish Committee voted to not take the full disbursement available from the endowment, and to let it grow. Should we use the surplus to pay down the mortgage?
 - 2.2.1. We did refinance the mortgage at a lower rate, which will lower our monthly payments a bit. But if we put extra money on, it will only lower the length of the loan, not the monthly expense.
 - 2.3. Who do we have our bank account with?
 - 2.3.1. Citizens Bank, because it is convenient and because it what was in place when Erik started his tenure.
 - 2.3.2. We should consider other banks for both financial and principal reasons.
 - 2.4. How will the bonuses work with our staff changing?
 - 2.4.1. We are giving the bonuses to the staff that were employed with us at the time of the vote. Freddie Francis will not get a bonus, but Kate Loftus-Campe and Melissa Sky-Eagle will.
 - 2.5. Question from Jeannette Anderson: Is the Paul Revere bell insured separately? There was a consultant a few years ago, but don't recall the results.
 - 2.5.1. Research will be done by the property committee and others to determine if the bell is properly insured.

Motion to accept the Treasure's Report and FY 2021-2021 budget.

Vote passed unanimously.

ARTICLE V To conduct such further business as is necessary.

Presentation of Bell Awards to people who support the parish from behind the scenes

1. Erik Bailey presented to **Carl Franceschi** – In gratitude he did on the bell tower and securing the CPC grant.

2. Katherine Calzada presented to **Phil Lynes** and the Worship Committee for keeping the congregation together in the services during the pandemic, including “field trips” to other parishes.

3. Susan McGarvey presented to **Janet Klein** for her work on the Pastoral Care Team and the Re-Opening Task Force.

4. Eliot Jekowsky presented to **Tad Staley** for founding the Big Questions Forum four years ago, which has expanded into leading the Adult Education program, as well as instrumental in lining up virtual speakers, maintaining the website and the online forums.

5. Darren Zinner presented to **Erik Bailey** for his years and years of service as the parish treasurer, OWL teacher, social activities, Parish Committee member, running the pledge drive, getting the PPP loans, and making sure that the staff got raises and bonuses. His fiscal foresight has kept us in good financial shape even though the overall church membership has declined

Motion to adjourn at 1:38.

Vote passed unanimously.

rites of passage

NEW MEMBERS

Steve Goldberg

Total membership as of 5/4/2022: 245

DEATHS & MEMORIALS

Gordon Doerfer (June 21, 2021)

Richard (Dick) Anthony (July 17, 2021)

Martin O'Connor (October 21, 2021)

Alan Exon (November 25, 2021)

Vivienne Chapman (December 7, 2021)

Louise Talbot (December 9, 2021)

Susan (Susie) Jarrell (January 24, 2022)

Catharine (Cathy) Motley (January 29, 2022)

Rev. Catie officiated the memorial services for Larry Norman, Alkis Makrides, and Penelope Clay.

This year, we mourned with many First Parish families at the loss of their close family members and friends, as well as with the whole world with the ongoing death toll due to COVID-19 and violence in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mexico, Myanmar, Palestine, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and more.

MARRIAGES

We celebrate with our many First Parish members and friends who experienced the joy of weddings amongst their extended family and friends since our last Annual Meeting.

BIRTHS AND DEDICATIONS

Richard (RD) Loftus (January 12, 2022)

We celebrate with our many First Parish members and friends who have welcomed grandchildren and niblings into their lives since our last Annual Meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

For FY 21-22 our two major goals were to resume activities in the church safely while staying connected to those in the community who chose to participate remotely, and to welcome a host of new staff members.

We began our FY 21-22 with our building closed and worship and other activities completely remote. As the pandemic began to abate, Rev. Catie asked for a task force to be convened to make recommendations about re-opening the church in a manner that protected the health of the community as we began to interact in person. Thus, one of the principal goals of the Parish Committee was to create policies about resuming in-church activities guided by the recommendations of the Reopening Task Force (ROTF). Although hopes were high that we would be able to open the church for in-person worship in the Sanctuary, it was clear from many sources that the risk was too high.

As September and October went by, the incidence of cases began to drop, and through the efforts of Ed Quinlan and Jan Galkowski, the ROTF was able to utilize a risk model created by a professor at MIT that could predict the risk of becoming infected based on several variables, including air exchange, extent of vaccination, and masking, among other factors. We were finally able to begin in-person worship in the Sanctuary as well as running the Worship Café in the Parish Hall by placing exhaust fans in the choir loft and opening windows in the Sanctuary. Though it was a joy to be together again in worship, attendance was initially low and as the weather turned cooler, it was increasingly uncomfortable in the Sanctuary. Tom Gehman and Tom Pugh came to the rescue by acquiring and installing remote cameras in the Parish Hall, and after Christmas Eve services, worship services were moved into the Parish Hall. During this time, we had a multi-platform worship experience, i.e., in addition to in-person worship, services were accessible via Zoom as well as YouTube. The multi-platform format contributed significantly to keeping the sense of community that is highly valued in our congregation.

To address the temperature challenge in the Sanctuary, Ed and Jan made air flow measurements with the windows closed and determined that ventilation in the Sanctuary would be adequate to maintain low risk as the incidence of infection in the community drops. As I write this, we are about to resume worship services in the Sanctuary in a more comfortable environment.

We welcomed a new music director, Laura Nevitt, and an accompanist, Kelvyn Koning, to our staff. Laura and Kelvyn have brought a delightful diversity of music to our congregation, both in their selection of choir pieces as well as singing hymns and anthems during services. During the Fall, the choir creatively used the mild weather to rehearse in the church parking lot, using a portable piano for accompaniment. The choir continued to record choir pieces as they had done last year, i.e., listening to and watching Laura's and Kelvyn's recording and conducting through headphones and recording individual voices on mobile devices, which were then expertly mixed by our staff musicians and played during worship services. Recently, as the surge from the Omicron variant subsided, the choir has been able to rehearse and record pieces in the well-ventilated Parish Hall, wearing high-quality masks. The choir is looking forward to being able to sing live during worship services providing infection rates stay low. The First Parish Players and the First Parish Singers recorded pieces remotely, which were incorporated into the worship services and kept the tradition of lay music in services going.

We also welcomed a new Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE), Sara Elizabeth Dyer – Santa Cruz. Sara has made many valuable contributions to our community in addition to working with the RE youth. She has created engaging Time for All Ages segments in our worship services that have meaning for adults as well as our youth. She played a valuable role in helping the ROTF to clarify its objectives by facilitating a listening circle.

We welcomed Billy Umland as our new sexton. In addition to custodial duties, Billy has helped the Toms to set up the audiovisual equipment and has set up and broken down the seating in the Parish Hall, as well as managing the fans in the Sanctuary.

We will soon ordain Jenna Crawford to the ministry and wish her well on her journey. We will welcome Darrah Bryans as our new intern minister.

And as always, we shout out our deep appreciation for Susanna Whitman, our office manager, who is the glue that keeps FP running smoothly.

Looking back, we have been challenged by the shifting risks of the Covid 19 pandemic, and we have risen to the challenge by providing a low-risk environment in the building and hybrid worship and other activities that have contributed to keeping our spirit and togetherness of our community. Looking forward, we hope to see more opportunities for in-person gathering that is low risk. Bringing our congregation together again will help us to reinforce our sense of community. It will allow us to increase our connections to, and support for, each other and our community. While much will depend on the state of the pandemic, our goals for next year will include driving engagement among our congregation and examining our membership levels to determine the best plans for growth in the years ahead.

Eliot Jekowsky

President, First Parish in Needham

April 3, 2022

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT
by Rev. Catie Scudera

Each Sunday morning, we speak in unison the words of our Parish covenant, affirming that:

We gather as a loving community, to encourage and comfort one another.

We gather as a diverse community, to support each other in our search for spiritual truth.

We gather as a service community, to live our beliefs through action and care for our world.

And, we speak in unison as we extinguish our chalice, pledging that though we “extinguish this flame,” “we carry in our hearts the light of truth, the warmth of community, and the fire of commitment until we are together again.”

When I composed my Annual Report in April 2021, it seemed unbelievable that when leaders invited the congregation to say the unison covenant and chalice extinguishing this year, we’d still be prefacing those liturgical elements with words like “though we cannot *all* gather together in-person” and “until we *are, all, together* again.” Before the delta variant came to the United States, we thought the 2021-2022 church year would bring us into “the new normal.” Unfortunately, we’ve had to continue to follow case rates and sewage data, assess risk and stick with public health precautions, and even revert back to all-online Sunday services and programs during the omicron variant surge. I surely hope what we’ve experienced with COVID-19 in this church year will not be our “new normal” — nor do I want to see the ravages of war, the gross global inequality in privilege and power, and the ongoing disregard for our precious planet continue in the worldwide “new normal.”

However, there are many aspects of our congregational life during the pandemic that absolutely spring from the communal practice of our church covenant and bring us closer to First Parish’s mission “to create a welcoming, diverse, and compassionate religious community that celebrates the sacredness of all living things, nurtures lifelong spiritual and ethical growth, and works for social and environmental justice locally and throughout the world.” I hope we will carry forward the positive parts of our worship and programs that were continued or formed during the pandemic. And, for the remainder of my report, I will stay in that spirit of gratitude for the past and optimism for the future.

As I said last year, I am still thankful, amazed, and humbled by the commitment you all have shown to First Parish as an important community and institution in your lives and in the fabric of Boston MetroWest. I hope all of you know how deeply appreciated your gifts of talent and treasure are, as you continue to serve on committees; offer music during worship; lead affinity and spiritual practice groups; visit with and bring meals to fellow congregants in need; organize and support learning, service, and fellowship events for all ages; pledge financial gifts; and, strive to live our parish covenant in and outside the walls of our church buildings. I have special thanks for our Nominating Committee and all those who have agreed to serve in important elected positions, and to our Auction Co-Chairs (Rana Mana Doerfer and Jim Long) and our Budget Drive Team (Bob DeNoble, Linda Davis, David Minard, and Kevin McCormick) for a fun auction and an effective pledge drive. How incredible that the financial generosity of First Parish members and friends has remained so stable since 2019! Thank you all so very much.

I’m also especially grateful to the partnership between the Reopening Task Force and Parish Committee as they’ve navigated their charge to guide First Parish in our reopening strategy, balancing safety with our human need to connect in-person. And, I’m very grateful to our amazing staff team, those who have been with us for many years (Susanna, Freddy, Tom, and Jenna) and those who were brand new in fall 2021 and have rolled with the many changes this year has brought (Sara Elizabeth, Laura, Kelvyn, and Billy). Our DLRE, Music Director, and Sexton search teams did commendable work to bring us such wonderful new religious professionals — not to mention our Intern Committee, who will bring us another great ministerial intern, Darrah Bryans, in the fall. Susanna, the Parish Committee, and our HR volunteer Bruce Barnett are also to be commended for their work in hiring and onboarding all these new staff members.

With the exhaustion and trauma of living through over two years of a global pandemic — not to mention recent political upheavals, violence, and further evidence of the climate crisis — we should be proud of our

church community for our resiliency, compassion, and creativity. On Sundays, we've gone from only having the staff in the building, with outdoor in-person rituals, religious exploration, and choir rehearsals; to having registered seats available in the sanctuary and Parish Hall, and adult choir and youth group in the Parish Hall; to only being in the Parish Hall; to going back to fully prerecorded services; to being back in the Parish Hall, with singing; and now, back into the sanctuary once again with indoor singing and children's religious exploration.

These shifts in response to COVID-19 represent an enormous amount of effort and creativity, especially from the Worship Committee and Zoom hosts, the Reopening Task Force (and their HVAC advisors, Ed Quinlan and Klaus Hoyer), our usher/greeter team (led by Tracy Zinner and Kevin Grealish), our tech team (Tom Pugh and Tom Gehman), and our music program (both professional and volunteer). And, these shifts on Sunday mornings represent a willingness from the congregation at large to offer grace and understanding about changes in our plans, unexpected tech issues, and the need to continue to wear high-quality masks even as mask mandates have dropped in many public spaces. Your extroverted minister, who has an unvaccinatable child with two grandmothers in cancer treatment, is deeply appreciative of every opportunity to see all of you in-person with reasonable COVID precautions in place. Many thanks are due as well to our Committee on Ministry and Worship Committee for taking polls and restarting monthly feedback sessions during social hour (both in-person and on Zoom) to check in on the health of the congregation in our second pandemic year.

I want to elaborate on the incredible flexibility and dedication of the music program. Though Laura and Kelvyn are both new to our staff and have had fewer opportunities than usual to meet our singers and musicians in-person, they have still collaborated with and supported our two house bands (the First Parish Singers and First Parish Players); brought the choir back to sing together in-person for the first time in well over a year, and helped them become familiar with each other's voices again; supported our SongSquad in creative compositions and videos; and, brought many excellent musicians of diverse backgrounds as guests for our Sunday services. It's a blessing to have two excellent musicians, composers, and directors on staff. Our lay singers and musicians have offered so much to the church community during this time when it's been so challenging to make music together safely; I think especially about our Betty's Singers healing and hospice choir gathering in backyards and over FaceTime, and Laura and Sara Elizabeth's leadership in bringing back our well-loved Carol Sing tradition. I deeply appreciate that instead of quitting, our singers and musicians adapted to the present circumstances to continue their music ministry.

Just in April, our children's religious exploration programs and SongSquad returned indoors, after 25 months of being either online or outside. During our first two Sundays with children back in-person, I felt overwhelmed with gladness and grief for how much I missed seeing and hearing young people on Sunday mornings — and for how much I have wanted my own daughter to be part of this loving RE community. Sara Elizabeth has done a wonderful job connecting with and organizing meaningful and fun activities for our kids, teens, and parents, despite pandemic complications. I have appreciated — and I know many of our families have too — how Sara Elizabeth has kept their needs and concerns at the forefront during this difficult reopening year. One example of this was Sara Elizabeth's collaboration with Laura on the fabulous "Our Festivals, Our Families" holiday worship service, after families reported they didn't quite have the energy for a second year of virtual Festivals of Light. Another example is Sara Elizabeth's work to bring together the first overnight Senior Youth Group service trip since February 2020; I was also thrilled to join the Senior Youth Group for one day of their five-day service trip to Maine. I hope every adult in the congregation will feel great gladness and appreciation for our amazing young people for their flexibility, thoughtfulness, and enthusiasm — and will consider signing up as a children's RE teacher to facilitate ongoing in-person RE.

We've had a number of amazing online groups keeping our community connected, some that existed before the pandemic (like Small Groups, Meditation Ministry, and our Book Groups) and others that have developed during the pandemic (like Vespers, Creative Escapes, and Writers Escape). Our Lane Lyceums have been remarkable both years of the pandemic, bringing in a variety of speakers on many topics of interest thanks to our Continuing Ed team with support from other committees, lay leaders, and Sara Elizabeth. None of these adult education and connection opportunities could exist without lay leadership.

I've also appreciated collaborating with Sara Elizabeth and Jenna on a number of Continuing Ed offerings, including trauma care workshops and circles; a membership and marketing workshop; and, a study group about the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report from our national denomination about diversity and inclusion in UU communities.

Another way our community has stuck together despite the challenges of the pandemic is through our Pastoral Care and Caring Crew teams. I'm grateful for Gail Lehman in her service as Pastoral Care chair, for Ann Barrett and Gail Hedges serving as Caring Crew co-chairs, and for all those leading our Support Groups. Cathy Livingston has also been a wonderful new leader for our Reception Crew, advising many folks hosting memorials at First Parish how to adapt to public health precautions. We have hosted many beautiful hybrid memorial services at our congregation this year, with tremendous credit to Tom Pugh and Tom Gehman for ensuring smooth integration of prerecorded materials and high-quality livestreaming to YouTube. And, part of our communal trauma recovery from the pandemic will be the cumulative grief we experience when we come back together, remembering all those who died or moved away during these two years of separation.

I'm also proud of First Parish's ability to continue our service to the wider community during this tiring second pandemic year. Some examples are our launching our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee; starting the weekly climate vigils and the "11th hour" bell ringing demonstrations; continuing our work with the Pathways Family Shelter Mitten Tree, Needham enslavement history, and the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute; volunteering through Temple Beth Shalom to support an Afghan evacuee family; and, our youth group partnering with a youth alum on a "cozy sock drive" for those living in a nursing home in Western Mass. I am especially grateful to Deborah Niles for taking over as chair of the Social Action Committee, for Eleanor Rosellini stepping in for Jan Galkowski as Green Congregations chair while he recovered from a major accident, and for Vicky Makrides and Marianne McGowan co-chairing our new DEI Committee.

I personally have served in justice leadership for the Needham enslavement/land theft Memorial Group, on the At My Neighbor's Table planning committee, and for First Parish's participation in the nationwide UU Reproductive Justice Sunday. I was also invited to speak at the Needham Diversity Summit; Equal Justice in Needham's vigil in support of Marvin Henry and police accountability; at an open School Committee meeting about changing "Columbus Day" to "Indigenous Peoples Day" (which was successful); and, at a professional development workshop for Needham Public teachers about Needham's enslavement history, with Dr. Gloria Greis of the Needham History Center. Through my service as co-president of the Needham Interfaith Clergy Association, I also co-organized Needham's Interfaith Trans Day of Remembrance virtual service (in partnership with our friends at OUT MetroWest), the Needham Interfaith Thanksgiving virtual service, a vigil for peace and democracy in Ukraine, and an ecumenical Good Friday service. I am also now a member of the new Needham Resiliency Network as a clergy representative, and attended two rallies in support of trans youth at Needham High School and in downtown Boston.

I have hopes for many things in the coming weeks before the church year ends. I hope before our Annual Meeting that our amazing and gifted ministerial intern Jenna will have received the call to serve the UU Church of Marblehead as their next senior minister and that many First Parishioners will have participated in the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. I hope that at our Annual Meeting, we'll vote to adopt the 8th Principle and to approve a carefully crafted budget (with great appreciation to treasurer Joan Mecsas and Finance Committee members Erik Bailey and Sam Graves). I hope we'll see the launch of our new church website, built by our long-time web designer Bill Taussig, with lots of support from Jeanne Rawson and Will Rico. I hope we'll finally officially finish our major bell tower renovation and repair; though all the work to "keep the bell ringing" (and the roof in good shape) was completed in the fall with great thanks to the Needham Town Meeting for its Community Preservation Act gift, our weathervane went missing during construction and we're only now (thanks to the dogged work of Carl Franceschi and Ed Quinlan) about to have it replaced. I hope the church year will wrap up on some very high notes: with Jenna's ordination to the ministry, Youth Sunday, and our first indoor flower communion since 2019.

This summer, I am personally looking forward to attending the national UUA General Assembly in-person for the first time since 2019; it will be good for my soul to gather with colleagues and lay UUs, and to celebrate Jenna's entry into UUA preliminary ministerial fellowship at the Service of the Living Tradition. I intend to spend my study leave weeks reading poetry, studying trauma recovery, and planning for 2022-2023 Sunday services and adult RE offerings. In my vacation time, we plan to take some time in New Hampshire and to visit family: my mother will have completed immunotherapy and thus the bulk of her cancer treatment, and we'll be taking as much time as we can with my mother-in-law as she continues to fight her incurable cancer. Cole and I also hope to celebrate our tenth wedding anniversary with a short vacation just the two of us, with the dogs in doggie daycare and Sophia at grandparent daycare.

Next year, I believe our congregational "goals" are to recover, reconnect, and recruit. We'll need caring communal space in the long haul to recover from the trauma of the pandemic years, as trauma research demonstrates that we will experience individual and collective post-traumatic stress for the next few years. We'll need reconnection to one another as we continue our reopening with livestreamed worship and hybrid meetings and gatherings, figuring out how to include all our members and friends. We'll need a full-congregation effort to recruit new members and friends to our faith community, as we all hope for First Parish to grow and thrive in the coming years.

It is an honor to serve as your minister, and I'm blessed by our shared ministry together.

Blessings,

Catie Scudera

MINISTERIAL INTERN'S REPORT

As I'm sure will be written about elsewhere in this annual report, this was another challenging year to live through. Although by around this time last year, vaccines were beginning to be made more widely available to adults in our country, because not a high enough percentage of the population took them, we never quite reached herd immunity and the virus responsible for Covid-19 continued to spread, mutate, and spread again. The fall of 2021 saw the surge of the delta variant in our area, and the winter of 2022 saw another omicron surge—this one infecting magnitudes more people than any of the prior strands. What's more, February of 2022 saw the imperialist and ethno-nationalist project of the Russian invasion of Ukraine—and the region is still far from stable. Just this week, we read of heinous war crimes in the suburbs outside of Kyiv Ukraine and a missile attack on the crowded train station platform in Kramatorsk that killed at least 52, including children. Our First Community has decried this unjust war in a myriad of venues: through our weekly sharing of joys and concerns, by co-sponsoring local vigils for Ukraine and education events on the history of the conflict in the region, and we have also contributed financially to humanitarian aid efforts. Add to both of these global traumas the ongoing fatal violence (often at the hands of law enforcement) of black and brown bodies, the recent spike in inflation which seriously threatens the already-impoorished in our city, state, and nation, climate-related natural disasters of the last year, (and more), and the heartbreak and heaviness of this year may begin to become palpable.

On a more personal note, I should open my annual report and frame my additional comments by saying that in late December (2021), I took a fall in my apartment, which culminated in a head injury that seriously limited my ability to work in January and February, with lingering but not as severe effects in March as well. Throughout January and February, I had to take a pause from my participation in Vespers services, social media, pastoral calls—for just a few weeks at the beginning, the budget drive, religious education, and couch conversations. I still did manage to lead the one service/month that I am scheduled for, including a service on Christmas Eve, and participate in all other Sunday worship services that I was not off for, although Rev Catie helped me out by writing some of my parts occasionally. I am so grateful to the FP staff and community for their understanding, support, and grace when I struggled to be on screens for many weeks in January and February. I also want to name Rev Catie, the Vespers team, the Pastoral Care team, and the entire First Parish staff team specifically and express my gratitude for them for helping to cover various parts of my work during this time.

In my role as ministerial intern, I am responsible for leading one worship service a month and for active engagement in the worship life of the congregation. Between April 2021 and 2022 (the time lapsed between my last annual report and this one), I led some special services last spring honoring the anniversary of the Black Wall Street Massacre in Tulsa Oklahoma and for Pride Sunday. For the first, we leveraged the multiplatform nature of worship to hear real testimonies from survivors of the massacre, and, for Pride, the theme of the service was “Bless and Be Blessed,” and so our FP LGBTQ+ activists, members, and families wrote blessings and developed the theological thrust of the service. In the fall of 2021, I led worship services on covenant, prayer (and especially what prayer can look like for non-theists), All Souls Sunday (in which we built an All Souls Remembrance Altar and talked about masks and estrangement), and creativity in the time of the pandemic.

In the winter and spring of 2022, I led services on MLK Sunday (in which we learned about Bayard Rustin in Sara Elizabeth's excellent Time for All Ages and explored what King and his contemporaries can teach us about integrity), calling during our February ministry month of calling/vocation, and a service marking the second pandemic anniversary in our community with Rev. Catie. The “Two Years Later” service--as we referred to it--combined comedy, music, and art from the pandemic, with short stories from our own First Parishioners, and a homily by Rev Catie on trauma and storytelling and my own homily on finding certainty during a time of rampant uncertainty.

Although, in terms of worship staff, it was challenging to say goodbye to Melissa Sky-Eagle, Kate Loftus Campe, and Roberta Altamari at the end of the 2020-2021 church year, it has been such a delight collaborating with our new Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration, Sara Elizabeth Dyer Santa Cruz, our

new Music Director, Laura Nevitt, and our new accompanist, Kelvyn Koning. They all bring so much talent and grace to their respective positions, and an eye for diverse storytellers and musicians.

What's more, the Worship Committee, Tech Team leads (of Tom Pugh and Tom Gehman), staff, Ushers/Greeters, Reopening Task Force, and many more have been extremely nimble, creative, and dedicated as we have continued to have the need for multiple different worship formats as the status of the pandemic has changed over the last year (between entirely pre-recorded, entirely on Zoom, staff-only in the sanctuary, hybrid from the sanctuary, and hybrid from the Parish Hall). I have so much gratitude for everyone's flexibility and commitment to delivering excellent, sustaining worship even as so much changes from week to week.

Outside of the Sunday worship service, I also attend monthly meetings of the Worship Committee and collaborate with Rev Catie Scudera, Helen Lane, and Rebecca Keller Scholl, (with amazing tech support from Becky Siebens, Leslie Nelken, Craig Scholl, and Phil Lynes) to lead our weekly Thursday evening contemplative Vespers services, for 30 minutes on Zoom. Our regular Vespers attendees love these services that were started at the beginning of the pandemic by former FP Intern Rev Sally Fritsche and consider them among some of their central spiritual practices. What's more, during low-case-count points of this past year, we were able to offer short worship services at the North Hill Senior Living Community—which we had been entirely unable to do during the first year of my internship. The two services that I co-led with Rev Catie were a joy!

In terms of Rites of Passage, since the submission of my last report, I officiated a wedding outside of First Parish (the wedding of Kathleen and Chris Healy) in July of 2021 and attended/supported the memorial service of our beloved member Dick Anthony. We also have tentatively scheduled the dedication of Sophia Stephenson (Rev Catie's daughter) for June of this year, which I would officiate. I also participated in the ordination ceremony of one of my colleagues, Rev Daniel Lawlor, to the UU ministry, which was held in December at First Church Boston.

As you can imagine, pastoral care has continued to be a large need during this time of pandemic. I attend monthly meetings of the Pastoral Care team and this year, more so than last, have been able to visit more members in person either at their homes, at church, or in a hospital, although we still encounter many more challenges and restrictions to in-person visiting than we would during a non-pandemic year. Rev Catie, Sara Elizabeth, and I were able to facilitate a Trauma 101 Teach-In both for the FP staff team and for the Pastoral Care Team earlier this fall, as one of our priorities this year has been helping folks cope with the trauma of the pandemic and identify how trauma might move through our church systems—while training some of our lay leaders to acknowledge and address the same. I am grateful for the training I received at Boston University School of Theology on trauma and theology (from Dr. Shelly Rambo) to give me some initial footholds into the work of trauma-informed ministry.

One of my other roles as your ministerial intern is to support the children's, youth, and adult religious exploration at First Parish in Needham, where appropriate. I have so enjoyed supporting our new Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration, Sara Elizabeth Dyer Santa Cruz, at occasional All Kids Together "AKT" programming, like the Halloween RE Party, and junior/senior youth group sessions. Since submitting last year's report, in the 2021-2022 church year, I also collaborated with Roberta Altamari to plan and lead one of the service day trips for the youth group hybrid service trip—a trash clean-up and environmental ethics reflection at Cutler Park in Needham. Lynne Rachlis joined to co-facilitate and Ellen Fine led a terrific talk on environmental racism and the environmental history of the Needham-Natick-Dedham area. In the realm of adult education, I enjoyed collaborating with the Reopening Task Force to lead a panel discussion on the ethics of pandemic decision-making last spring. I've also enjoyed leading a one-time workshop on Spreading our UU Values with Rev Catie last fall, leading a multiple-session course with Rev Catie and Sara Elizabeth on the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report (a report of recommendations from the Commission on Institutional Change in order for our congregations and denomination to become more fully anti-oppressive), and participating in the Lane Lyceum on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. I am preparing to lead another Lane Lyceum later this spring, before the completion of my internship.

By way of social justice in the public square, this year, I've continued to engage with our congregation's 8th Principle and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work. That has looked like co-leading a study group on the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report with Rev Catie and Sara Elizabeth, attending a conference at Boston University on theology and disability justice, co-leading an 8th Principle worship service last fall with Rev Catie, and attending the DEI Committee meetings led by Marianne McGowan and Vicky Makrides where we continue to brainstorm what anti-oppressive ministry looks like at all levels of congregational life. I also attend once monthly meetings of the Social Action Committee, our umbrella committee that oversees the work of our smaller justice working groups. This year, as opposed to last, I've been able to get a little more exposure to the "public square" through in-person vigils and protests, such as the Friday for Future vigil for the climate on the Needham Town Common (led by Jan Galkowski, Jonathan Tholl, and Kevin Grealish) and a demonstration on Transgender Day of Visibility on the steps of the Massachusetts State House in support of LGBTQ+ youth protections and visibility (with Rev. Catie, Music Director Laura Nevitt, and member Geri Sheehan).

Another of the seven competencies for professional UU ministry is administration and leadership. I began this church year using some of my professional expenses to attend an online course on supervising staff with consultant Susan Beaumont, which was a wonderful professional development opportunity to supplement my Fundamentals of Nonprofit Management course at BU's Business School. Although my concussion made it difficult to attend the Pledge Drive meetings that I was planning to attend this year, I was able to attend the 2022 Kentucky Derby-themed auction (organized by Rana Mana-Doerfer and Jim Long), which exposed me in a different way to church stewardship and fundraising. I even auctioned off a history tour to Walden Pond for folks to bid on, which is planned for late May. We also used some of the space and time of our all-staff and core-staff meetings this year to talk about trauma in church systems, brainstorm how to maximize the spiritual and fellowship benefits of our programs while following the public health guidance of the reopening task force, strategize how to adapt to the changing pandemic landscape, and understand how to address and resolve conflict in the congregation.

I've aimed to be persistent in my collegial connections during this isolating time. I meet biweekly with a group of other local UU parish interns, on Zoom, for support and group supervision. Prior to my meeting with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA, I met weekly, on Zoom, with an MFC study and prep group. I also returned to BU in order to serve as a panelist, sharing reflections on my MFC interview and time preparing for the MFC with other applicants and candidates for ministry. Speaking of connections, I've collaborated with members of the Needham Interfaith Clergy Association on a Trans Day of Remembrance interfaith service that Rev Catie led this year, and on a panel about faith journeys for a local cub scout troop earlier this spring.

One of my roles as outgoing ministerial intern is to help prepare for the arrival of the next ministerial intern. I reviewed the new job description and made myself available for informational phone calls with applicants for the position. Though we had three applicants for the position, only one scheduled an informational call with me, in which I shared about my positive experience as your ministerial intern over the last two years and answered questions that they had. What's more, since Rev Sally Fritsche's ordination was entirely online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been a while since FP has hosted an in-person ordination ceremony. The ministerial intern committee and I are busy planning for my ordination for early June, and I hope to leave some resources with them that they might use to help support the planning of any future ordinations at First Parish.

In terms of our online and social media presence at First Parish, I contribute to our Instagram and Facebook pages by posting upcoming service reminders, special announcements, and 1 minute midweek moment of joy videos. Rev Catie and I also keep a video blog called "Couch Conversations" where we film ourselves having a conversation about the monthly ministry theme. I also add sermon manuscripts and vesper service recordings to our website and YouTube channel, respectively—with the help of webmaster Jeanne Rawson. I also maintain my own professional Facebook page that many First Parishioners follow, where I upload relevant articles and share photos of what I'm doing in the community. The hope always is that our online presence will be one way that we attract new members and help to push our faith into the future. Another

way, I'd argue, is through the work (already detailed above) that our DEI Committee is doing on helping the congregation dismantle white supremacy culture and other oppressions from our congregational culture.

In terms of my own personal ministry milestones and formation as a minister, this year has been an incredibly busy one. In mid-May of last year, I graduated from Boston University School of Theology with my Masters of Divinity and a concentration in Interfaith Leadership. I spent the summer and the fall after graduating studying and preparing for my appointment with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA in December, 2021—in which I was cleared to join preliminary fellowship as a UU minister at the completion of this internship, with no other contingencies. I knew it would be a quick turnaround after the MFC to get everything ready for search if I was cleared by the Transitions Office to do so, but what I didn't expect was that I would be doing all of that with a head injury too. Between December 3 and January 1, I pulled together a search website and my ministerial record and reviewed many congregational records of churches I would apply to. During January and February, I took first-round interviews; March brought pre-candidating (second round) interviews; and, by March 31, I learned that I was selected to be the candidate for settled ministry at the UU Church in Marblehead Massachusetts. I couldn't have been more thrilled—this church prioritizes living their faith in action through social justice work and I really loved my time spent with search committee members. It will also allow me to stay in the Boston area, which--during my discernment process this spring--I realized was equally important to me. I am currently preparing to candidate with them in a few weeks, in advance of their congregation-wide vote to call me as their next settled minister. Although the news is of course bittersweet because it also is a reminder that my time here in Needham is gradually coming to a close, I will be carrying with me the blessings and learnings of our shared time together into this next chapter, with a grateful heart.

And, finally, on March 9, 2022, the Parish Committee voted “yes” to ordaining me at First Parish around the close of my internship with you all. Though these last two years have been anything but ordinary, I truly would not be the minister that I am if not for all of you. In our UU congregational polity, the privilege to ordain is vested entirely with the congregation, so I hope that you all will join me on June 4 to ordain me to the UU ministry and celebrate all of our shared accomplishments of the last two years. We will be monitoring the status of the pandemic to determine how much of the ordination will be in-person and how much will be online, if there will be a need for advanced registration, and what the vaccination and masking requirements will be.

As I close this report, I want to end with gratitude for Lynne Rachlis, Rana Mana-Doerfer, Gail Lehman, Cindy Fung, and Marcie Hebert-Maccaro—our wonderful Ministerial Intern Committee! Thank you all for everything you've offered over the last two years, as I've grown into the role of professional minister: your support, insights, wisdom, celebration, and accompaniment. And to the entire First Parish community: *thank you, thank you, thank you*. From the bottom of my heart.

In faith,

Jenna Crawford

April 2022

DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION'S REPORT**By Sara Elizabeth Dyer-Santa Cruz**

It is difficult to imagine a stranger year to begin working with a new congregation. I remember just last May meeting with Roberta and Rev. Catie to work on a smooth transition. It was a time for me to learn even more about this community I was preparing to serve and imagining a path forward for the lifespan religious exploration programming at First Parish. We were looking at declining COVID numbers, increasing vaccination numbers, and had a great deal of hope for a more “normal” start back in the Fall. But as we all know, those same numbers did not hold, and the pandemic has continued on without the hopeful trajectory we had been plotting a year ago. But despite the continued stress of the pandemic, the First Parish community has forged ahead with a sense of resiliency, dedication, and love. The Religious Exploration program has been a beneficiary of all of these gifts as it has continued on through this church year.

As we began the church year continuing with an all-online format, I was able to be a large part of the Sunday worship services – an opportunity to continue introducing myself to the church each week while “face-to-face” introductions were not much of an option. I have been creating primarily pre-recorded Time for All Ages for each week’s service with a particular focus on introducing our community – children and adults alike – to children’s books and stories that reflect our faith’s community to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in addition to their deep connection to each week’s worship themes. One of the small joys of the pandemic has been learning and practicing how to effectively incorporate virtual or pre-recorded elements into worship, a skill that will be well used even beyond the pandemic as we present Time for All Ages that may benefit from better visuals that prerecorded formats provide. The ability of our RE program (and families of First Parish!) to effectively utilize pre-recorded formats for worship also allowed us to pivot our winter pageant to better serve the congregation. Though last year’s pre-recorded “Festivals of Light” was well received, many families reported feeling stressed about the process of producing the scripted pageant material on their own. This year’s program, “Our Festivals, Our Families” allowed various families and congregants to submit pictures, stories, and video clips of them sharing their family’s holiday traditions. We were able to watch an entire worship service filled by the faces, voices, and stories of our community at a time when our ability to be in physical community had been so deeply changed.

Though we adapted to this pandemic in its onset, we have also adapted as it has changed. RE has hosted two outdoor gatherings as a way to build community in a low-risk way, specifically with an Autumn themed gathering to celebrate Halloween and the changing of seasons and our recent Easter social hour. We have had many other outdoor RE gatherings as well, especially when we were holding in person, outdoor RE for our children and youth in the Fall before we were able to move indoors. When the weather became too cold, our children’s RE programming moved to zoom for a couple of months before returning to in-person, indoor RE at its pre-pandemic timing of occurring during the Sunday church service this April. Our return to indoor programming has meant developing COVID protocols specific to our RE programming and providing N95 equivalent masks for the children in our care. RE is currently working to make our community even more trauma informed and serving the unique developmental needs of our children and youth in this pandemic period by providing a more diverse selection of “fidgets” and regulation tools during worship and RE. As we transition to more in-person programming, we are seeing more engagement from our children and families: a trend I am confident will continue.

Our Senior Youth Group has been inspiringly resilient in this complicated time. They have been meeting regularly and participating in various acts of justice-oriented service and learning. From discussing food insecurity to learning about prison abolition work and writing to our incarcerated neighbors, our Senior Youth Group remains engaged and passionate about living their values. In April, our youth were able to have a 5-day service trip to Southern Maine. Though COVID made some aspects of the trip challenging, our youth rose to the challenge! We planned a trip that incorporated outdoor service opportunities in order to keep our trip as low-risk as possible. Our Youth Group completed 3 different outdoor service projects: a trail and beach clean-up, working on a sustainable/regenerative farm at Wolfe’s Neck Agricultural Center, and working on a farm connected to Cultivate Community – an organization in the Portland, ME area that addresses systemic issues of food insecurity. The trip was filled with laughter, bonding, learning, and service. By utilizing COVID testing before leaving and during the trip as well as masking in all indoor public situations, we were able to limit our COVID risk and exposure. Our youth and their families were dedicated to making this trip work well, and I am grateful to everyone in our community who made this trip not only possible but successful.

As we prepare for next year, one of our biggest needs lies in reconnecting our RE program to volunteers in our congregation. We currently have a small and deeply dedicated group of volunteers that support our RE programming, but we also recognize that this is something that can cause a couple of problems. 1. Having a small group can too easily lead to burnout for our volunteers, and 2. We know that our children and youth benefit from having a large support network of safe adults in their lives. As we continue on, the RE program is thinking of ways to recruit and engage more non-parent First Parish congregants in the rewarding work we are doing. As we prepare to reintroduce OWL to our programming next year after a pause during the height of COVID, connecting and reconnecting more adult volunteers to RE has never been more important.

Though I have spent a lot of time here addressing the work I do with the children and youth of the congregation, the “lifespan” piece of my work has been a joy in countless ways. Part of this work has been supporting our Continuing Education committee in their incredible work on producing a bustling schedule of Lane Lyceum talks. They brought in important speakers on a variety of important topics from less known religious communities, to ethical agriculture, to the dynamics of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and beyond. We have increased our technical support of these programs by uploading them to our YouTube and exploring the possibility of live-streaming them to YouTube regularly after finding success in this with one particularly well attended Lane Lyceum. There is also now a more standardized approach to how the Lane Lyceum awards honorariums to the speakers that present, a concrete way of living out our values by paying people fairly for their labor. Plans are already underway for incredibly exciting Fall Lane Lyceum programming!

As we hurtle toward the end of this church year, I am excited and encourage by the work of this community and its dedication to lifelong learning. We have done so much and there is still much to do. And while it is difficult to imagine a stranger year to begin working with a new congregation, I am grateful for this strange but beautiful beginning here at First Parish and the exciting work we have yet to do together.

Take care of yourselves and each other,

Sara Elizabeth (she/they)

Sara Elizabeth Dyer-Santa Cruz

Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration

April 2022

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Laura Nevitt

Music Director: Laura Nevitt

Accompanist: Kelvyn Koning

Musical Groups at First Parish:**First Parish Choir:** Laura Nevitt, Director; Kelvyn Koning, Accompanist**Song Squad:** Laura Nevitt, Director; Kelvyn Koning, Accompanist**First Parish Singers:** Jim Sargent, Leader**First Parish Players:** Dave Blom, Leader**Betty's Singers:** Janet Klein & Becky Siebens, Leaders

I was onboarded as Music Director in mid-August 2021 - and very excited to being my work at First Parish. Overall, it has been a challenging year for us all because of the ever-changing landscape of the world with COVID-19. However, despite these challenges, we have still created much beautiful, moving, and thought-provoking music, thanks to the never-ceasing efforts and dedication of our musicians in all of our groups at First Parish.

The First Parish Choir has shown up and thrived, despite so many challenges this year. We began rehearsals online and did virtual choir pieces, moved to rehearsals outside while still recording virtual choir pieces individually, having rehearsals/recordings together inside at the end of the year, going back to virtual rehearsals/videos due to Omicron, and finally back to in-person rehearsals and recordings in the past couple of months. It has truly been a roller coaster, but the resilience of our members is unmatched - they are always there, ready to sing, no matter what.

So far this year, the First Parish Choir has performed/recorded twelve songs (with more to come) of varying styles and time periods. Some particular highlights include "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Harold Darke for Christmas Eve, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in celebration of the beginning of Black History Month, "The Road Not Taken" from *Frostiana* for Music Sunday, and "Al Shlosha D'Varim" in honor of Passover. The past couple of months when we have been able to meet in person have been a huge joy and area of growth for the choir. Being separated for two years makes a big difference in how we have all been able to make music, which is truly a communal experience. Being able to be in the same space and I as the director being able to give feedback in real time has been very healing and helpful to all of us - this is choir as it is truly meant to be. I look forward to the possibilities as we continue down the path to a more consistent choir experience for everyone.

The Song Squad has been going strong this year - they have performed/recorded eight songs this year, with more to come. Some highlights have been "Happy Halloween" (written by the kids and I), "Shalom Chaverim", "Roar", and most recently, "Surface Pressure" from *Encanto*. I think the kids were more excited about that song than any other they have done this year - and their joy showed through in their performance. For rehearsals this year, we have been either outside, on zoom, and most recently inside the church. My main goal for the Song Squad this year was to have the kids together as much as possible, enjoying the music and each other's company, as well as giving me a chance to really get to know the kids. Joy and inclusion have the main goals, and I believe that effort has been successful. I look forward to now being able to add piano to our performances, since we are inside, and building on this foundation for the rest of the year and in the future.

The First Parish Players have been so generous in the music they have shared with us this year - they have performed music in a huge variety of styles. Some highlights were "Freytrog", "The Swan", "Witchcraft", and "I Let A Song Go Out of My Heart". I am very grateful for the FPP's contribution to the music at First Parish - their (mostly) instrumental music adds so much, and their ability to play in multiple styles adds a lot of diversity to our music.

Jim and Beth Sargent have also added much to our music this year, sometimes just them, and sometimes along with members of the First Parish Singers. A few songs that I would specifically highlight from this year are “American Dream,” “Crazy in Alabama,” and “River”. The songs that Beth and Jim choose are always so very pertinent, moving, and memorable.

We have had several guest musicians join us this year: Brysien Beer, Kira Neta Apaachuaq Eckenweiler, Jean Huang, Robert McFletcher-Jones, Jameson Thompson, Che Buford, Soren Austenfeld, Chris Lockman, and Nightingale Vocal Ensemble. I have made a conscious effort to bring in musicians from historically marginalized communities, to give them our support, as well as offer us their unique perspectives. Most of these musicians submitted videos for us, while Jean Huang was thankfully able to join us in person.

Kelvyn Koning has been a huge asset to us as accompanist and pianist. He has also lead choir rehearsals and worship when Laura has been absent due to illness or time off. They have offered a huge amount of service music, in singing, playing piano, and the occasional piece on organ. They are also composing a piece I have commissioned for the choir, which we will perform in June.

As a musician, I have also been so delighted to perform songs in worship as well, mostly singing and playing guitar. I am glad to be able to work with Rev. Catie to find songs that carry special significance to the messages of specific services and sermons, such as “Angel Down” by Lady Gaga, and “Blowin’ in the Wind”, by Bob Dylan.

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**by Susanna Whitman**

The congregation weathered the pandemic admirably, despite the losses and trauma that such events bring. It was difficult not to see one another as we usually do. This weathering is a testament to the strength and love in this community. We renovated the bell tower, maintained the building, maintained our finances, and most importantly, maintained our community. As we move ahead, we will need to celebrate reconvening together as well as to mourn losses.

This church year was characterized by our collective plans and expectations that the pandemic was wrapping up and would recede, and then this not actually coming to pass. It meant that we retracted and then reopened three times, once in September at the start of the church year, once in late October after a Covid-19 spike subsided, and then restarting again in February, after an additional (Omicron variant) closure. Each time necessitated new practices to put in place.

Worship Support from the Office

In November we implemented a worship registration program, using Eventbrite to try to minimize transmission of the virus. We required people to attest that they were vaccinated and symptom-free if they planned to attend church in person rather than on YouTube or Zoom. We did not continue to use this registration when we reopened in February, and we do not use it now.

These changes also meant variations were made in our orders of service for worship. As the church year began, we continued, from last year, to produce a Saturday *Bell Notes* order of service. In October, we began to also produce a printed order of service that was laid out on a folded page as it was years ago (before our legal-sized, pre-pandemic orders of service). This stopped when we closed in December and January. Upon reopening in February, we printed the *Bell Notes* order of service and in March, began to produce Loop Bulletin, which is for handheld devices including smart phones and tablets. It can also be viewed on a computer, but is formatted for a portrait format presentation on a narrow, vertically oriented, device. We will continue to print copies for in person worshipers who do not access the order of service on electronic handheld devices.

In December in time for Christmas Eve, as a covid-19 precaution, Leslie Nelken and Ed Quinlan set up cordons in the sanctuary to ensure that people socially distanced.

Many thanks to Leslie Nelken and Laurel Davis who have been producing the Saturday Bell Notes for 2 years. This is at an end, as Loop bulletin has taken its place. Loop contains the order of service, announcements, a link to online giving, a visitor card for new people, covid protocols, our vision mission and covenant, land and enslavement acknowledgement, and a meet the staff section. Leslie and Laurel continue to produce the Thursday *Bell Notes*, which is much appreciated.

For our Christmas Eve and Easter services, I ensure that we advertise in *The Needham Times* and *The Hometown Weekly*. This year we placed our first online ad, at Easter.

I also liaise with our piano tuner, at Laura's initiation, to ensure that the three pianos at First Parish are kept in tune. The pianos are in the sanctuary, parish hall, and music room.

Finance

Starting this church year, our new Treasurer is Joan Mecasas. Welcome to Joan! And many thanks to Erik Bailey who served in this role these past three years. We have a new Finance Committee, whose members are Sam Graves, Erik Bailey, and exofficio member Joan Mecasas. Together they have worked to put together next year's budget.

As a matter of routine, our bookkeeper Jenny Conley comes twice a month and produces a check run each time. She enters income, payroll, and reconciles our bank statements. I have a great deal of preparation to do each time she comes to make the most of her time for us. I have been insistent this year that people requesting checks fill out a form so that Jenny has all needed information and I do not need to do time-consuming remedial work on this, filling the forms out for those asking for reimbursement. I hope that all

will understand that I have much to do to serve the congregation, and that volunteers can give Jenny the information she needs, themselves.

At the start of this church year, in July 2021, we had our \$60K Paychecks Protection Program (pandemic) loan, of the previous church year, fully forgiven. I had applied for it in May 2020, and we were awarded it in June 2020. The forgiveness essentially makes it a grant.

Our mortgage rate was renegotiated by Bob DeNoble, and we were able to lower it, thus reducing our interest payments. I supplied documentation. Many thanks to Bob!

I renegotiated our contract with Verizon to get a better rate, and our monthly bill was reduced.

I recorded and tracked the annual budget drive and capital campaign pledges, and Bette Vogel entered payments as they arrived. The capital campaign is for the restoration of the bell tower.

The capital campaign received \$98,699 in pledges, of which \$96,649 has been paid, to date. The due date for all payments for the campaign is December 31st, 2022. In addition, the congregation received a grant from the Town of Needham for \$50K, and a matching anonymous gift from a generous donor in the First Parish community also of \$50K. We were able to cover all expenses of the bell tower renovation and to set up an ongoing fund for building upkeep and maintenance. This fund is sorely needed, as the Building/Maintenance budget account line is regularly exceeded each year. This will greatly help.

This year's annual budget drive is, at the time of this writing, at pledges 91% of the goal, or \$339,467 with a goal of \$375,000.

I supported and liaised with the auction cochairs, Rana Mana-Doerfer and Jim Long, as they prepared our wonderful event!

Rentals

Our long-term tenants, Needham Children's Center (NCC) and Charles River Ballet Academy (CRBA) are both paying the going rate on their rentals. NCC had a cut during the early part of the pandemic, due to their low enrollment. Happily, both businesses reopened and are functioning well. Occasional rentals this year are up. We have scheduled four recitals in Parish Hall for this Spring.

Building

Ed Quinlan continued as Property Committee Chair this year. This is enormously helpful during the pandemic, and his continual attention to building issues is a cause for gratitude from the whole congregation. Many thanks to all Property Committee members Susan Camuti, Christy Cocchi, Carl Franceschi, Karl Heinz, Jeff Heller, Mary Ann Oldfield, Phil Pierce, Elizabeth Rosa, and Mary Sprogell.

The bell tower restoration began earlier than anticipated, at the end of Spring of 2021 and was completed that Summer. Painters Pride was the company that did the majority of the work.

For pandemic health and safety, Ed Quinlan was instrumental in ensuring proper ventilation and air purification in various rooms in the church building. In particular, we are only using the sanctuary (meetinghouse), parish hall, the offices, classroom 3, the music room, and the youth room as these are variously either properly ventilated or have air purification installed, or both.

Last church year, due to the pandemic, NCC and CRBA were entering the building from two different entrances. They used NCC, the Lincoln Street entrance and CRBA the memorial garden entrance. NCC, CRBA, the Property Committee, and I worked out when we would open the Lincoln Street door for both to use, and when it would be unlocked for all. It is now open when ballet is in session, but not when only NCC is in session.

I ensure that various appliance and system inspections take place, including the boiler, the elevator, the sprinkler system, fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, and the sewer backflow. Additionally, I am, or a member of the Property Committee is, present for the servicing of various building systems and features. The Town will shortly give us a building inspection.

With so few in person meetings in the past two years, (most meetings were online on Zoom) committees and groups will need to get reaccustomed to booking space for their meetings in rooms at the church.

Staff

At the start of this church year, we onboarded a new Sexton, Music Director, Accompanist, and Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration (DLRE). This took much of my time during the first half of the Fall, to set up benefits, help train and orient, and initiate other services for our new staff members.

I supervise three people on staff, Tom Pugh, Worship Service Producer; Freddy Soto, Cleaner; and Billy Umland, Sexton. I conduct midyear and year end evaluations of each of them.

Office

This year, I continued to work in the office two mornings per week, as in the first year of the pandemic. We had looked at making a change in the direction of normal, just before the most recent spike of a new variant of Covid-19 this Spring. My time in the office is focused on work that can only be done there. I scan many documents so that I can access them when I work from home, which is most of the time. I access my office computer from home through a VPN.

Last Summer, volunteers Bette Vogel and Ginger Newcombe were of great help in taking care of office work. During the other three seasons of the church year, Jane McKeon and Bette have worked in the office, weekly. Ginger has assisted occasionally, also. Gail Hedges has organized teams of mailing collators just as she did before the pandemic. Gail Hedges, Gail Lehman, Carolyn Lynes, Jane McKeon, Bette Vogel, and Carol Alper, among them, sent out at least one of our three (3) giving statement mailings this year, including the warrant and 8th Principle document, and also the budget drive mailing. All of these volunteers have been of enormous importance to the functioning of the First Parish office.

Each year, Don Leathe gathers our stats and data and submits our annual online certification with the UUA by February 1st. This is a valuable service to the congregation.

This office needs its volunteers and we're grateful to them all!

Our cloud backup system stopped working and we now have a new system for all desktop computers in the office wing. I also ensured that all computers can print to the copier and receive scans from the copier, as somehow these connections got broken. Our helpdesk company took care of this.

I produced a parish directory this Spring. It includes a leadership section at the front, with Parish Committee, Trustees, and committee chairs listed. Following this is a list of our members and friends. If you have corrections to this, please email them to me in the office, and in the next edition of the directory these changes should be made. As always, the most current information is in Realm. You can look people up there, for their updated contact information.

Each year I canvass all committee chairs, staff, and Parish Committee officers for their annual reports to compile this congregational annual report.

During the Summer, from the last week of June through the third week or so of August, my hours reduce from 35 hours/week to 10 hours/week. In Summer, I work Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5 hours/day. This has been the case since I began this role in 2013. I am an exempt employee (a labor/tax classification) and therefore am paid a salary regardless of the number of overtime hours worked. There has been a great deal of extra time, during the pandemic, with much to figure out and extra things needing to be done.

Each week I have financial statements and invoices to prep for entry and payment, supplies to order, have compliance to fulfil, either online or otherwise for things like insurance and nonprofit status-related documentation. This is a busy, complex job with a very wide range of areas of responsibility. Having great volunteers and colleagues makes it all possible and worthwhile!

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT FIRST PARISH IN NEEDHAM COMMUNITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

MUSIC AT FIRST PARISH DURING THE PANDEMIC

Eliot Jekowsky

March 2022

The Covid 19 pandemic provided both challenges and opportunities for musical activities at First Parish in Needham. When FP went to all online worship services, our Music Director, Irina Georgieva, and our Assistant Music Director, Kate Loftus Campe, began recording hymns, preludes, postludes, and offertories that were played during the worship service. After Irina's departure from FP in October 2020, there was a library of pre-recorded music which was used for worship services as FP searched for a new music director.

Due to the uncertainty regarding the course of the pandemic, the timing of reopening, and the need for someone with tech skills, it made sense to create an Acting Music Director position, for which there were over 60 applications. We were able to choose from candidates all over the country, and selected Melissa Sky-Eagle as the Acting Music Director, who lived in Texas and joined us in December 2020. Choir rehearsals with Melissa were enjoyable, and the choir produced several beautiful pieces, with individual singers recording their parts and Melissa and her colleague mixing the parts into a full choir presentation.

In the Spring of 2021, we began a search for a permanent Music Director who was local. Laura Nevitt assumed the role in August 2021 along with Kelvyn Koning, our accompanist. It was anticipated that we would be reopening in-person worship in September of 2021, but this had to be delayed due to the Delta variant surge. Nevertheless, the choir rehearsed in the parking lot of the church in the Fall, until the weather turned colder. The choir continued to rehearse and record remotely with Laura and Kelvyn even as in-person worship resumed, due to the increased risk of transmission from singing.

As the Omicron surge began to abate, the Reopening Task Force advised that the choir could gather in Parish Hall safely with high-quality masks. As of this writing, the choir is rehearsing and recording live in Parish Hall with masks. Barring another surge in Covid cases, we hope to soon sing live during worship services in the Parish Hall and the Sanctuary.

SUNDAY NIGHT BOOK GROUP

Jeanette Anderson

The Sunday Night Book Club made the transition from monthly meetings in peoples' homes to zoom meetings quite easily. However, the closure of the Needham Public Library for some months was more problematic as most of our members use the library for their books. Phyllis Beck found two links for free classical selections: Hoople through the Needham Public Library and guttenberg.org. These online books and plays gave us a unique opportunity, while the library was closed, to read such titles as, *The Importance of Being Ernest* by Oscar Wilde, *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London and *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw.

ACTION BOOK CLUB

Cathy L Livingston

The Action Book Club began meeting in person at the Parish in September 2019. During social distancing and other precautions were put in place during the pandemic, our monthly gatherings were supported via Zoom. We helped one another learn how to navigate the Zoom world, and we'll have to wait and see if participants want to continue meeting via Zoom or if they would like to gather in person once it is safe to do so.

CREATIVE ESCAPES

Lyn Jekowsky

For the past two and a half years I have facilitated Creative Escapes in a Zoom format. The intent of this program is to connect with each other and the First Parish Community, and to freely create.

Responding to a doodle or theme, participants select an art medium to express their emotions, shedding light on their reality. Projects are shared, which deepens our connections. Our weekly meetings of up to a dozen participants offer an escape from reality through artistic expression, while staying connected.

MEDITATION PROGRAM

Lynne Rachlis

The First Parish Meditation Program has been ongoing for many years. During the pandemic, however, our weekly gatherings became a lifeline for many, reliably providing peace and alleviating isolation every Thursday at 7:30pm. Moving online has also made it easier for many to participate even when time is tight, night driving is stressful, and the comforts of home essential. When it is safe to gather in-person again, we are likely to continue this ministry online because it is responsive to the needs of so many more First Parishioners.

COMPOSING YOUR OWN NARRATIVE

Cathy L. Livingston

For the past three years, I've been offering classes (Part I: Composing Your Own Narrative; Part II: Becoming) that assist participants in gaining a more integrated view of our lives. More than thirty participants have been part of this work. Prior to Covid-19, we met in person at the Parish. We switched to a Zoom format once the Parish established safety precautions. Our work together has enabled members of our community and others to stay connected and experience a caring community. Our weekly gatherings have allowed us to have deeper conversations about our lives.

WRITING ESCAPES

Nora Hussey

Each week members of the community are invited to participate in an hour of creative writing. The *prompts* are provided by the workshop leader and are broadly based across a wide swathe of interests. Participants then share their work and offer supportive feedback to each other. These have been on zoom which allows folks not in the immediate area to fully participate. The focus for the gathering is encouraging and helping to develop writing as a practice for engaging with the world and the individual response to it. Plans are being formulated for creating a chapbook to share the creative output with the broader UU Needham community.

PERFORMING *OUR TOWN*

Directed by Nora Hussey

A three-night reading of the American classic *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder was presented involving over twenty members of the community and two guest artists. Musical and scenic elements were created and technically supported by community contributors. It was rehearsed over two months and presented in Zoom format. Everyone who expressed interest was cast and roles were allotted across the three acts which allowed broad participation. Minimal costuming allowed actors to more fully inhabit their roles. The community response was very positive and encouraged the director to propose future projects which could engage the community both on Zoom and live performance formats. It was acknowledged that there was a bountiful array of talents across the ages in this community.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
ACTION BOOK GROUP

Committee Chairs: Cathy L. Livingston, Facilitator

Participants*: Jeanette Anderson; Karla Barbieri; Anna Berkenblit; Elinor Brady, Jeanne Gerber; Janet Klein; Cathy Livingston; Kevin McCormick; Susan McGarvey; Joyce McGovern; Leslie Nelken; Bob Rands; Geri Sheehan; Becky Siebens, and Pat Tholl

*Attended at least one discussion

Mission Statement: *The Group meets once a month to discuss books addressing current issues in our country. Selected books offer a deeper understanding of both past and current forces influencing actions at the national, state, and local levels. Our meeting time is divided into two parts: a) Discussing the book; and b) Sharing new learnings and insights, and potential action steps that each of us feels comfortable pursuing in an effort to preserve the core values of our democracy.*

List of Books Read/Projected to June 30, 2022

- **Thursday, July 1, 2021.** Book discussed: *The Upswing: How American Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again* by Robert D. Putnam
- **Thursday, July 29, 2021** Book discussed: *The War on Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World* by Jamil Zaki
- **Thursday, September 30, 2021** Book discussed: *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper* by Heather McGhee
- **Thursday, October 28, 2021** Book discussed: *Peril* by Robert Woodward and Robert Costa
- **Thursday, December 9, 2021,** Book discussed: *There is Nothing For You Here: Finding Opportunity in the 21st Century* by Fiona Hill.
- **Thursday, January 27, 2022** Book discussed: *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons From The Twentieth Century* by Timothy Snyder.
- **Thursday, February 24, 2022** Book discussed: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid
- **Thursday, March 24, 2022** Book discussed: *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism* by Anne Applebaum
- **Thursday, April 28, 2022** Book discussed (projected): *Lessons From The Edge: A Memoir* by Marie Yovanovitch
- **Thursday, May 26, 2022** Book discussed (projected): *Capital Without Borders: Wealth Managers and the One Percent* by Brooke Harrington
- **Thursday, June 30, 2022** Book discussed (projected): *Corruptible: Who Gets Power and How It Changes Us* by Brian Klaas

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- Continue to read and learn from our discussions as well as take positive steps for change.
-

ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE TEAM REPORT

Committee Chair: Kevin McCormick

Committee Members: David Minard, Bob DeNoble, Linda Davis

FY23 Pledge Drive Summary

As of the writing of this report (late April), we currently have \$339K of pledges from 132 households, and the pledge drive is substantively complete. This compares to \$346K of pledges from 144 households last year.

Key numbers:

- A. 69 households increased their pledges from last year, for an aggregate total increase of \$16,962.
- B. 1 household pledged for the first time.
- C. 46 households stayed the same as last year.
- D. 16 households decreased their pledge from last year (but still pledged), for an aggregate total decrease of \$11,457.
- E. 13 households who did pledge last year but did not pledge this year, either because they are no longer part of our community or they are unable to pledge, for an aggregate total decrease of \$13,450.
- F. The average pledge was \$2,572 (up from \$2,430 last year), and the median pledge was \$1,703 (up from \$1,500 last year). Pledges ranged in size from \$30 to \$13,200 with 43 pledges of \$1,000 and under (totaling \$23,806), and 20 pledges of \$5,000 and over (totaling \$152,190).
- G. There was an appeal at the end of the pledge time asking households to increase their initial pledge. 7 households increased their initial pledge for a total of \$2,495. (This amount is included in the numbers above)

We appreciate and thank everyone who has pledged and therefore will be generously supporting our congregation. We also thank those that have increased their pledge over last year and a special thanks to those who were able to add to their initial pledge.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Jeanette Anderson

Committee Members: Anne Brain, Buffy Duhig, Muriel Gehman, Shirley Pratt

Mission Statement: *Our mission is to collect, maintain and safely store any materials of continuing historical interest to First Parish. Through periodic exhibits in our collection, we try to interest members in their historic past. Another of our priorities is to help the staff and committees answer questions about past events. The present committee was organized in 1998. Prior to covid, we met twice a month on Tuesday mornings in the Youth Room.*

September 2021---The Archives Committee participated in the Volunteer Fair organized by the Program Council.

November 2021---For History Sunday, the Archives Committee mounted a small exhibit featuring pictures of former ministers of First Parish. The Committee also assisted the minister in researching the activities of First Parish during the 1918 flu epidemic.

February - May 2022---Because the Archives Committee was not able to meet, we decided on a long, neglected project to track down our cherished interims and interns and find out where they were, where they have been and what they are doing now. We plan to have an exhibit in Parish Hall which would include pictures, a copy of sermon or poem or anything they would like to share.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

2022-2023---The Archives Committee is eager to help any committee if they wish to research their history at First Parish. We have annual reports, copies of the Bellman and Orders of Service, plus document and articles for most committees.

AUCTION COMMITTEE

Committee Chairs: Rana Mana-Doerfer (Carolyn Lynes Mini Auction Co-Chair 2021), Jim Long 2022 Co-Chair

Mission Statement: *The mission of the auction committee is to raise funds for First Parish to support its fiscal goals to help fund our activities which include social justice, Youth trips, etc.*

Summary of goals and accomplishments

- In September of 2020 Rana reached out to Reverend Catie regarding the Mini Auction, we had held our biennial big auction in 2019, and it was a success. The Mini-Auction was set to take place the following year, which usually happens in September/October, but March of 2020 brought upon us a pandemic and our lives were altered dramatically. With much support, guidance, and encouragement from Reverend Catie we agreed to attempt a virtual silent auction. I did some research and found Biddingowl.com which is an entirely online platform to run virtual auction, both silent and live.

My goals for the mini auction were to find a co-chair first, and then begin asking for donations. Carolyn Lynes agreed to be my co-chair for the 2021 mini-auction. Somethings we changed for the mini auction included instead of having folks drop their items off at FPN, they dropped off donations at my front porch, as well as email me their donations. The First Parish in Needham community came out strong. Over 100 items were donated, between gift cards, handmade quilts, services, and artwork, I was so overwhelmed with amount of creative, beautiful, and thoughtful items folks were donating.

- **The Technical Stuff:**
 - We raised a net total of \$6,362.01, the Finance Committee I believe had projected \$2,500 because of the pandemic.
 - We used two platforms for the auction one was the bidding owl which charges a total 5% performance fee for running an online auction. So, for every \$100 they take \$5. And we also used PayPal to process and receive payment, PayPal charged us 2.9% + \$0.30 for every transaction. So, a \$90 transaction would be \$87.09. So, after everything was said and done the bidding owl charged \$392.80, and the total fees charged by PayPal was \$198.99.

I am incredibly grateful to the First Parish in Needham community, for their resiliency in the face of a pandemic and a complete shutdown of our way of life. Folks show up and stepped up and it shows.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- As we moved into 2022 it was clear that the pandemic was still here to stay, after much back and forth regarding if and when we can hold the big auction in person, the go-ahead was given to begin planning. I am grateful to Reverend Catie, Eliot Jekowsky, Susanna Whitman, and the Re-Opening Task Force for all their help and support to get the big auction going.
 - With Jim Long as Auction Co-Chair we began the process of soliciting donations and volunteers, planning the space, the decorations, the theme, etc. the final count on donations is not tallied yet, but at the time of writing it can confidently be said there are already 50 items of various categories.
 - #1 Goal is to hold and facilitate a safe, fun, and joyous big auction, where folks get to be under one roof again.
 - #2 Goal is to at least raise half of the projected auction funds.
-

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Committee Chair: Don Leathe

Committee Members: Gail Hedges, Don Leathe, Liz Rover-Bailey, Anne-Marie Sklarwitz and Reverend Catie Scudera.

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Committee on Ministry is to support the work and mission of First Parish by supporting the minister in her mission to serve the First Parish Congregation within its walls and within the larger communities of Needham and Metropolitan Boston; to support the ministries of the congregation in achieving their goals and growing their membership; and to support the general health and well-being of the Parish by promoting open communications and building trust between individual parishioners, the larger congregation, and Parish staff.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Goal: #1: Supporting the Minister; The Committee on Ministry met with the minister monthly, via remote conferencing, and regularly reviewed the church's Covid-modified program, discussed any related issues and identified related follow-on actions. The Committee's focus was on supporting her professional development goals including church administration and management, personal and professional time management, intern minister and staff supervision and program evaluation. Also we served as a communication facilitator between and among various constituencies; congregation and staff primarily.

Goal: #2 Promoting Open Communications; This has been a challenging year to facilitate open communications due to the Covid-required remote services and programming. However primarily through monthly remote listening sessions during coffee hour we were able to facilitate that communication.

Goal #3 Promoting Membership Expansion; Unfortunately, due to the Covid-restrictions implications this year this goal was not able to be pursued from both a church membership growth and Committee membership growth perspective. We did decide that the current CoM membership was sufficient for the current year however it needs to be pursued for the upcoming year as Don, Gail end in June 2022. Additionally, we inquired of the UUA about their resources to help facilitate outreach to the wider community.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

Goal #1 Supporting the Minister; The Committee will continue to meet monthly with the Minister to discuss the church program, surface any issues and formulate related action plans to address any issues. Additionally, we will continue to support Rev. Catie in her role as staff supervisor

Goal #2 Promoting Open Communication; The CoM will continue to support the Open Communication Project seeking congregational feedback via emails, comment box, and personal conversations. By hosting Open Communication monthly during Social Hour, the CoM wants to encourage parishioners to share their thoughts, concerns, questions, or complaints as well to allow us to monitor the spiritual health of the congregation. Input will be shared with the CoM and other Lay Leaders as appropriate. The success of the Open Communication Project will be reviewed and modified to maximize the benefits to all members and staff at First Parish. Some of these activities will need to be done remotely but also in person.

Goal #3 First Parish Membership Expansion; The CoM will continue to support the Membership Committee and First Parish generally in its mission to increase and retain membership, and develop leadership within the congregation. We regard the Worship Cafe, Lane Lyceum, Generic Ministries, and other First Parish programs to be vital to this goal by enhancing the visibility of First Parish in the larger Needham community, fostering interactions among congregants, clarifying and focusing congregational interests and concerns, developing leadership, and welcoming newcomers.

The COM will recruit two to three new members for the Committee who represent various age and interest groups.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Jeanne Rawson (website), Leslie Nelken and Laurel Davis (*Bell Notes*), Susanna Whitman (ex officio)

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

1. **Goal 1:** Enhance Social Media presence: Introduced a Twitter platform this past year.
 - Recruit more members to take over Social Media posts to relieve the Minister and Intern Minister.
 - Do separate Social Media posts for other First Parish programs, such as the Lane Lyceums
 - Determine if we want to reach out to youth via Social Media on platforms such as TikTok.
- **Goal #2 set at beginning of year:** Expansion of use of a Goggle Doc to minimize frequent e-mailings and concentrating information recovery to one location for publishing to relevant platforms. The Staff Bellnotes document is working well as a primary source of information.
- **Other accomplishments**
 - Jeanne Rawson, Rev. Catie Scudera and Will Rico have been instrumental in reviewing the upgrades to the new First Parish Website. Bill Taussig has accomplished a tremendous amount of work in developing a Beta Site that is 90% complete. Our goal is to launch the new website in May 2022. Many thanks to Jeanne for supporting Bill and assisting with this work!
 - Starting in March 2022, through the use of Loop Bulletin, an online app for orders of service, announcements, and more, we were able to eliminate the need for Leslie and Laurel to produce a Saturday *Bell Notes* with the Sunday order of service in it. Many thanks to them for producing the Saturday Bell Notes for 2 years!

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

We will see where the needs of the pandemic and reopening take us and adapt accordingly.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Amy Cicala

Committee Members/Contributors: Neil Alper, Sara Elizabeth Dyer-Santa Cruz, ex officio, Wendy Blom, Nancy Winbury, Leslie Ross-Degnan, Tad Staley

During our second year of the pandemic, the committee continued with zoom-based programs. After polling people in the beginning of the church year, we made the decision to plan for Lane Lyceum's every two weeks on average. Our sense was that people no longer needed/wanted programs every week as we had done the previous year. Our primary focus for the lyceums was to have 4-5 sessions on specific topics though there were single topics which were often co-sponsored with other organizations/committees. The fall series was on religions of the Middle East and in the spring we focused on food issues. We also made the decision to forgo the Big Question Forum based on feedback we got from the survey.

In addition to the Lane Lyceum, programs started during the early days of the pandemic continued with great enthusiasm of participants. These include: Vespers; Writing Escape for Everyone; Meditation; Creative Escapes; Sunday Night Book Club; and the Social Action Book Club.

Lane Lyceums for 2021-2022 Church Year

Beyond Ourselves: Exploring World Religions

- Bill Miles, The Original Unitarians: Druze of the Middle East
- Craig Considine, The Culture of Encounter- Lessons from Prophet Muhammad's Links to Christianity
- Ramin Abrishamian, The Baha'i Faith

A Just Harvest: Ethical Food Production, Consumption and Policy

- Chris Bosso- A political History of Food Stamps, the Nation's Largest, Most Un-Loved, and Possibly Least Bad Way to Feed Poor People

- Jean Terranova- Food as Medicine
- Madhavi Venkatesan- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Kaitlyn Alvarez Noli- Farm Worker Health and Environmental Justice: The Perils of Pesticide-Intensive Agriculture
- Needham's Food Helpers- a panel discussion with:
Susan Shaver, Needham Community Farms;
Ellen Fine, Community Equitablilty Group, Resiliency Gardens Project
Sandy Robinson, Needham Community Council's Food Pantry
Rick Vincent, Generic Ministry

Additional Lyceums/Programs

- The FP Re-Opening Task Force, Covid-19, Where Are We?
- Cathy Livingston, Benefits of Composing Your Own Narrative
- Robert Forrant, Maritza Grooms and Wendy Blom- Airing and discussion of documentary, *Contradictory Place: Cotton Mills Along Anti-Slavery Efforts in Lowell*
- Cinzia Solari and Ilana Pavlotsky, Presenters, Smriti Rao, Moderator. The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: A Community Teach-In
- Charles Coe, Peace and (Poetry) Be Upon You
- Jenna Crawford, Reflections

DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) COMMITTEE

Committee Cochairs: Victoria Makrides (co-chair), Marianne McGowan (co-chair)

Committee Members: Susan Camuti, Linda Davis, Ellen Fine, Si Si Goneconto, George Goneconto, David Meccas, Leslie Nelkin, Jackie Shepherd, Becky Siebens, Charles Thomas, Jenna Crawford Ministerial Intern and Rev. Catie Scudera.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee was approved by the Parish Committee in June 2021. Our goal is to be a living resource for all committees, groups, and communities at First Parish as we proactively work toward becoming anti-racist and inclusive of all forms of diversity. To that end, we aim to foster and support realization of our UU Principles and Purposes and to implement the congregationally relevant recommendations from the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report.

The DEI committee includes members from diverse backgrounds and with various interests, including in racial and social justice, gender identities, disabilities awareness, food and farming disparities, and immigration justice. Members include: Susan Camuti, Linda Davis, Ellen Fine, Si Si Goneconto, George Goneconto, Victoria Makrides (co-chair), Marianne McGowan (co-chair), David Meccas, Leslie Nelkin, Jackie Shepherd, Becky Siebens, and Charles Thomas. Rev. Catie and Jenna also have been an integral part of our group.

We launched in September 2021 and due to the pandemic, we have been meeting largely on Zoom. Our first meeting was held in Parish Hall in a hybrid model with several members participating via Zoom; however, as the Omicron variant of COVID-19 spread in the late fall, we moved to fully remote meetings. Even though this format presents challenges, it has opened up opportunities. One of our members, Charles Thomas, participates from his home in Tennessee. Charles learned of our work by reading Rev. Catie's 2018 sermon on the role of slavery in the early history of First Parish and has gotten very involved in First Parish.

Our own committee structure reflects our commitment to experimenting with ways to create a more inclusive, more participatory and less hierarchical community. For example, to build relationships among committee members, we often start meetings with 10 minutes of 1-to-1 conversations in which we randomly pair to talk about either a prompt or whatever we would like to discuss. We also encourage a rotating leadership model and additionally use working groups so that members can focus on projects of particular concern outside of our regular monthly meetings.

One area of focus this year has been carrying forward work begun by the Racial Justice and Reparations task forces. To that end, among other projects, we have invested significant effort towards promoting a

congregational understanding of the proposed 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism in preparation for a congregational vote on May 15. Namely, we publicized the 8th Principle text, advertised the UU 8th Principle monthly meeting conducted by Paula Cole Jones, posted personal reflections, surveyed the congregation, and hosted two Zoom opportunities for members to bring questions and share their thoughts.

The DEI Committee has also sponsored events in collaboration with the Continuing Education and Social Action committees. In January, we screened the film “Contradictory Place” about the contradictory identity of Lowell, Massachusetts, as a center for the abolitionist movement even though the city prospered largely from cotton produced by enslaved people. Two people featured in the film – historian Robert Forant and community activist Maritza Grooms – attended the screening and answered questions. We will also co-sponsor the showing of a film about the history of housing discrimination in Needham. Both films were produced by First Parish member Wendy Blom. In April, in honor of poetry month, we are co-sponsoring an interactive poetry reading and workshop by Boston poet and author African-American poet Charles Coe entitled “The Defining Moment.” In May, we planned to host a book discussion of *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave Ona Judge* by Erica Armstrong Dunbar, encouraging participants to support the Frugal Bookstore, a Black-owned business in Roxbury. Additionally, Rev. Catie, with the support of Jenna and Sara Elizabeth, have been conducting an illuminating eleven session bi-monthly workshop on the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report.

We are also involved in reaching out to surrounding communities, for example, Linda Davis liaises with the Needham town memorial project regarding Needham's history with slavery and the important contributions to the community by enslaved, freed and indigenous peoples. In addition, the DEI committee is continuing First Parish's relationship with two important organizations in Boston: the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry (3 DEI committee members are delegates) and the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. Becky Siebens leads our involvement with the Peace Institute. Tina Chéry, founder and CEO, preached during our March 6 service this year, as she has for the past several years in preparation for the Institute's main fundraising event – the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. In collaboration with Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, First Parish will have a team walking this year, after two years of walking virtually. Another project we look forward to is incorporating the group's Peace Play kit into the work of our Grief and Loss Ministry. The Peace Institute created Peace Play to help people coping with grief and trauma as a result of violence. Now, we have our own kit thanks to the gift of the LDB Peace Institute.

As we complete our first year as an official committee, we envision that in the coming year the DEI committee will further develop and expand our collaborations with other First Parish committees to support our congregational aspiration, as expressed in our parish Mission Statement, “to welcome the participation of all people”.

FRIENDS OF SOCIAL HOUR

Committee Co-Chairs: Muriel Gehman & Leslie Ross-Degnan

Committee Members:

Committee Members: Buffy Duhig, Mair Lustig, Tabby Rappolt, Judy Hadrick, Jeanne Rawson, Kate FitzGerald, Elizabeth Rosa

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Friends of Social Hour is to provide the infrastructure and organizational support needed to maintain a vibrant weekly Social Hour at First Parish in Needham. Our Social Hour is a multigenerational opportunity for socializing and community building. It is a central part of the Sunday experience for all ages.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments: *No goals have changed due to COVID 19 and there were no activities related to these goals.*

Goal #1: Continue with our process to create the social hour schedule by assigning First Parish members and friends to dates to help at Social Hour. As needed, allow for the three special social hours:

the R.E. Picnic organized by the R.E. co-chairs, Volunteer Sunday organized by the Program Council, and Homegrown Coffee House organized by Jim and Beth Sargent.

Goal #2: Continue to work toward engaging more members of First Parish in volunteering for Social Hour. Assigning people to host Social Hour resulted in most members and friends of First Parish helping host. Sign-up sheets will be available at each social hour for people to volunteer to help more than once and several people new to the church volunteered to help.

Goal #3: Keep kitchen orderly and supplied for social hour.

o Each month a FOSH member is responsible for organizing the social hour supplies in the kitchen to make it easier for social hour hosts to find the supplies for set-up and to put away during clean-up, checking fridge for spoiled items, and basic light cleaning of the kitchen.

o The monthly kitchen assignments are setup by email and are posted in the cabinet to the left of the large coffee machine.

o FOSH meets as a group to do a thorough cleaning of the kitchen once a year, though this may change due to the Pandemic.

o FOSH chair is responsible for maintaining supplies.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year:

- **Issues: Decreasing the number of staff needed to host each Social Hour.** This was discussed at a Program Council meeting. Attendees liked the new process (rather than staffing social hour with committees and neighborhood groups) and were supportive of assigning 4 or 5 people (instead of 5 or 6) each Sunday for Social Hour. *This may change due to the Pandemic and cleaning processes required.*
- **Goal:** Continue with our current goals. As supported by the Program Council, we will be assigning 4 or 5 people (instead of 5 or 6) each Sunday for Social Hour. *This may change due to the Pandemic and cleaning processes required.*
- **Goal:** Plan a meeting of the FOSH committee a month before reopening to discuss any new processes or regulations required in light of the Pandemic.

Many thanks to the Worship Committee for providing ZOOM Social Hours following our Sunday services during the Pandemic.

GREEN CONGREGATION

Committee Chair: Jan Galkowski , (Eleanor Rosellini temporary chair during his recovery)

Committee Members: Elinor Brady, Linda Davis, Ross Donald, Ellen Fine, Claire Galkowski, Eva Jansiewicz, Katrina Kipp, Susan McGarvey, Deborah Niles, Suzanne Pelton, Ed Quinlan

Mission Statement: *Guided by the UU Seventh Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part," the Green Congregation Committee (GCC) will strive to bring about positive environmental changes through congregational activities across all ages, personal lifestyle changes among the congregants, and involvement with the broader community. In so doing, the Committee will achieve and maintain Green Sanctuary certification under the Unitarian Universalist Association.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Note: Due to the pandemic and to the serious injury and long recovery of the chair Jan Galkowski, Green Congregation has been limited in its activities this year.

- **Goal #1 set at beginning of year:** Some of the April plate collection will be given to Needham Community Farm. This will be the same in 2022.

- **Goal #2 set at beginning of year:** Engage and inspire the church to incorporate environmental impacts alongside monetary costs in all its planning and decision making. Add pounds CO₂e column to the balance sheet for purchases, activities etc. We have not worked on this goal.

Other accomplishments

- **Solar Production:** From March 2021 through February 2022, our solar panels produced 15,945 kilowatt hours of electricity. Since the panels were installed in March of 2013, they have produced 139,277 kWh (as of March 30, 2022), avoiding 186,770 pounds of CO₂ and saving the church thousands of dollars on its electric bills. <https://www.powerdash.com/systems/1000843/>
- **Fridays for Future:** Working with Fridays for Future, Wellesley Group, Jan organized a weekly vigil in Needham Center every Friday from 2:30 - 4 p.m., starting in October 2021, to remind people of the Climate Emergency and need for bold climate action. Several First Parish members are regular participants, with occasional participation by Jr. High students. The vigil has continued to date.
- **Communication:** Keeping people on Green Congregation and Social Action Committees informed about important environmental initiatives, locally and nationally.
- **Build Back Fossil Free:** After consultation with Green Congregation, First Parish signed onto the Build Back Fossil Free letter to President Biden. <https://buildbackfossilfree.org/> The letter, which was signed by over 1000 organizations, was released on February 24, 2022. The campaign demands that President Biden use his executive authority to stop fossil fuel projects & exports, end oil and gas drilling on public lands and waters, and declare a national climate emergency.
- **"Eleventh Hour" Climate Emergency Church Bell Ringing.** Inspired by bell ringing actions across the state, Green Congregation organized a monthly bell ringing at **11** a.m. on the **11th** of the month as a call to action for responding to the Climate Emergency. The first event was on March 11. After finding out about First Parish's initiative, the Congregational Church in Needham, as well as the Village Church in Wellesley, joined ringing their bells, and several other houses of worship have expressed interest or support. It will be an ongoing monthly event at least through August.
- **Partnering with Community Organizations:** To support First Parish's Climate Emergency bell ringing, Green Needham added and publicized a new "Climate Emergency: What Can I Do" section on its website. The Needham Channel covered the event and, working with Si Si Goneconto, is preparing a Climate Emergency PSA for release in early April. The Needham League of Women Voters helped design the Climate Emergency signs and will publicize the monthly events.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- **Goal:** Continue to do what we can to support local, state, and national initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- **Goal:** Continue our support of the Needham Community Farm by having at split plate collections for one month.

Issues: The committee has not been able to recruit enough younger members to ensure a viable committee in the long term. The committee will face challenges in getting reactivated post-pandemic.

THE HOMEGROWN COFFEEHOUSE

Committee Chair: Jim & Beth Sargent

Committee Members: : No standing members. This 39 year old ad hoc group is made up of FP members willing to volunteer for production assignments. Each show takes approximately 30 volunteer hours to produce, or about 500 hours total each year. We had many willing hands in this abbreviated season.

Mission Statement: *The Homegrown Coffeehouse was launched as a First Parish volunteer activity in 1983, with a mission to bring to Needham a wide variety of the then "folk revival" performers that were just beginning to surge locally and nationally. When COVID restrictions finally lift, we will continue to presenting major folk performer, a lot of lesser-known, up and coming folk artists, plus jazz artists, and pop performers touring nationally. Our First Parish-based folk club is widely recognized as one of the top venues in New England, with a national reputation for excellence.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

- **Everything** was on hold to start the season, which typically would happen in late September or early October. Like nearly every small venue, we had to wait. At this writing, in March, it appears possible that we may be able to do a soft restart in late April or early May.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

Goal: Performers willing, and no significant shift in the currently improving COVID landscape, we hope to offer one or two shows before Summer. If all goes well, we can continue to move toward resuming something like a normal schedule and celebrate the opening of our 40th season in the Fall.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Tony Cicala

Committee Members: Laurel Davis, Eliot Jekowsky, Jim Rawson, Elizabeth Rosa, Ginger Shapiro, Nancy Winbury

Mission Statement: *The Membership Committee supports the work and mission of First Parish in Needham by:*

1. *Attracting and welcoming newcomers to First Parish*
2. *Introducing newcomers to Unitarian Universalism and First Parish*
3. *Connecting newcomers with the ministry, programs, religious exploration, outreach, and social programs of First Parish*
4. *Where appropriate, facilitating and supporting the journey of newcomers from first-time visitors to active members*
5. *Nurturing the experience of members of First Parish in their continued spiritual growth and ongoing commitment to the goals of First Parish.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the membership committee has been quiescent.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- Restart the membership committee if the covid-19 downward trend continues.

Issues:

- Even before the pandemic the number of visitors and new members was dwindling. We need to establish a long range planning group to define who we are and how we attract new members.

MEMORIAL FUND AND GARDEN COMMITTEE

Committee Chairs: Buffy Duhig and Carol Alper

Committee Members: Lyn Jekowsky, Gail Lehman, Ginger Newcombe, Nancy Winbury, Amy Cicala, Lynne Rachlis, Leslie Nelken, Amy Brown, Joan Benzie, Tom Gehman

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Memorial and Memorial Garden Committee is to continue to accept memorial gifts to First Parish, acknowledge same, and use the funds with the guidance of the deceased family for special needs of the church, and to maintain the garden as a peaceful, meditative sanctuary.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Continued to maintain the gardens on a regular schedule throughout the growing season.

Installed donated paving stones and perennials in the Lincoln Street gardens entrance to avoid damage by foot traffic and reduce the maintenance requirements.

Purchased and installed a Japanese Andromeda, to replace a dying rhododendron, and additional euonymus plants along the Lincoln Street walkway.

Purchased and installed pachysandra plants at the entrance to the Memorial Garden to fill in around the removed tree.

Replaced hand watering hoses with lightweight, manageable hoses and added hose reels.

Considered replacement of foundation plantings along the Office, but put it “on hold” for a later time.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

Continue to accept and acknowledge Memorial Gifts.

Continue to maintain the gardens on a regular schedule throughout the growing season.

Evaluate the damage to the garden caused by the roofing crew and replace plantings as needed.

Purchase and install an appropriate bush at the entrance to the Memorial Garden, to further fill in around the removed tree.

The Memorial Window will have 9 new names added on Easter Sunday, April 19, 2022.

MINISTERIAL INTERN COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Lynne Rachlis

Committee Members: Marcie Hebert-Maccaro, Rana Mana-Doerfer, Gail Lehman, Cindy Fung

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Ministerial Intern Committee is to guide and support the intern minister as they seek to develop competence across the full range of ministerial skills outlined by the Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Association.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Second Year Internship of Jenna Crawford 2021-22

Support intern’s engagement with First Parish congregation and committees.

Members of the committee continued to provide ongoing encouragement and support for Jenna’s engagement with the First Parish community. We attended monthly services which Jenna led, and observed the growth and development of her ministerial presence and passion.

1. Convene monthly Committee meetings providing feedback, support, and guidance as well as monitor the intern’s fulfillment of Learning and Service Agreement components.

The Ministerial Intern Committee met monthly with Jenna who prepared focused and thoughtful agendas for the group’s discussions. Jenna also provided regular written reports of her activities at First Parish, with the larger Needham community, and with UUA nationally. At monthly meetings, we discussed her priorities and concerns including the impact of the continuing pandemic (which during this period included coping with both the Delta and Omicron variants) upon her internship. The Committee assisted Jenna’s preparation for her interview with the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee, supported her through the pre-candidating process with other UUA congregations, and helped plan for her Ordination in June 2022.

2. Observe intern’s engagement in First Parish programs, interaction with members, staff, and leadership during worship services.

Because of the pandemic, in-person activities continued to be restricted for safety reasons. This made it impossible to observe many in-person interactions between Jenna and the congregation or staff. When the building was opened for hybrid services in the Parish Hall, we observed Jenna’s leadership and engagement conducting services, preaching sermons, and engaging with congregation members

in-person and online during Social Hour.

3. Support intern's ongoing efforts to balance personal responsibilities and First Parish commitments.

Jenna's response to the continuing pandemic continued to impress us especially considering that she was also recovering the concussion she suffered in December 2021. As a Committee, we were pleased to observe and encourage Jenna as she thoughtfully prioritized her activities to fulfill essential responsibilities while attending to her medical needs.

4. Complete Ministerial Intern Evaluation for submission to UUA, including feedback from First Parish lay leadership and committees.

The Committee is in the process of acquiring feedback from First Parish members and lay leaders in preparation for the completion of the Final Ministerial Intern Evaluation for submission to UUA. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the UUA in May/June 2022.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

First Year New Ministerial Intern 2022-23

1. Welcome new ministerial intern to First Parish. Facilitate intern's introduction to First Parish committees, congregation, and routines.
2. Establish agenda and framework for monthly Committee meetings, including encouragement, feedback, support, and guidance. Monitor fulfillment of Learning and Service Agreement components.
3. Observe intern's engagement in First Parish programs, interaction with members and staff, leadership during worship services.
4. Support intern's efforts to balance Divinity School obligations and First Parish commitments.
5. Complete Ministerial Intern Evaluation for submission to UUA, including feedback from First Parish lay leadership and committees.

Select new chairperson (or co-chairpersons) and assist new intern in identifying a new committee member of her choosing from First Parish community.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Committee Chair: Gail Lehman

Caring Crew Co-Chairs: Gail Hedges and Ann Barrett

Committee Members: Ann Barrett, Amy Cicala, Buffy Duhig, Judy Hadrick, Gail Hedges, Gail Lehman, Nora Hussey, Lyn Jekowsky, Janet Klein, Fred Kresse, Helen Lane, Rick Vincent, Rev. Catie Scudera (ex officio), Jenna Crawford (ex officio)

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Pastoral Care Team is to nurture a spirit of hope and caring that reaches out to all members and friends of our congregational community. The Pastoral Care Team works together to: Identify situations that need caring attention and make appropriate assignments to meet those needs; Support and visit those who are unable to attend church regularly; Support families and friends involved in caregiving; and Provide mutual support and fellowship for one another while also looking toward our own spiritual growth and enrichment.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

- **Goal:** *Consider adding new members in the fall and invite members to take breaks, stepping away for a time or retiring, as needed.* Two long-time leaders chose to take breaks. Janet Klein, who chaired Pastoral Care Team for more than 12 years, was replaced by Gail Lehman. Lynne Franceschi, who led Caring Crew for several years during an especially stressful and needy time, was replaced by co-chairs Gail Hedges and Ann Barret. Immense thanks to Janet and Lynne!

- **Goal:** *Continue to consult with our Reopening Task Force for guidance concerning safety in making home visits.* Pastoral Care and Caring Crew followed guidelines regarding rides, delivery of meals, and outdoor/indoor/hospital visits.

Other accomplishments

- Continued to support members and friends in need with calls, visits, meals and rides.
- Continued the twice monthly Caregivers Support Group, led by member Lyn Jekowsky, a nurse with significant experience.
- Continued the monthly Grief and Loss Group, led by members Helen Lane and Janet Klein.
- Betty's Singers, the healing and hospice choir named in honor of the late Betty Byers, continued to rehearse (via zoom, outdoors or masked) and sang via zoom or outdoors for several church members.
- Sent sympathy cards during the December holidays to those who had lost a loved one.
- Continued to collect Sundays' Candles of Joy and Concern (prerecorded, in-person and zoom) and share them in the weekly Bell Notes.
- Provided pastoral care coverage by being on call for emergencies, with professional backup, during Rev. Catie's summer vacation. Monitored office phone calls during our administrator's winter holiday and summer vacation.
- Participated in a Trauma 101 workshop led by Rev. Catie, Jenna Crawford and Sara Elizabeth Dyer-Santa Cruz outside in October.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- **Goal 1:** Update list of Resources for Elders and Families.
- **Goal 2:** Clarify responsibilities of the Caring Crew.
- **Goal 3:** Continue seeking new members.
- **Goal 4:** Welcome and help integrate the new Ministerial Intern.
- **Issue:** Prevent burn-out. The co-chairs of Caring Crew coordinate meals and rides for members of the First Parish community in need of temporary assistance, with the help of many short-term volunteers. They have been stretched and exhausted by needs during the pandemic and by some in the community with longer-term needs.
- **Issue:** Some current members are experiencing their own health issues and may need to take time off to heal and renew. We are grateful for all they continue to do!
- **Issue:** As always, we need to emphasize nurturing and refreshing ourselves spiritually and emotionally, equitably sharing duties, remembering our limits, and respecting boundaries so that we can reach out and support others effectively and appropriately.

PROGRAM COUNCIL

Committee Chair: Jennifer Packard, Vice-President

Committee Members: Chairs of all committees

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

- In the fall, we updated the list of committee chairs and convened the council in an online meeting. The goal of the meeting was to discuss each committee's goals, identify areas where committees could work together, and provide support on issues where committee leaders felt they needed help.
- We held an outdoor version of Volunteer Sunday to help church members learn about each committee and find opportunities to volunteer with groups that met their interests. As this was

one of the first in-person events since the pandemic began, attendees enjoyed being able to gather.

- We acted as a liaison between the finance committee and other committees to help determine budget needs for next year.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

As restrictions related to the pandemic continue (hopefully) to ease, the program council can become more active in the coming year, increasing member engagement and effectiveness of committees. Goals for next year will include:

- Increasing parishioner involvement in committees.
 - Many committees are in need of increased volunteers, including committee chairs and other leadership roles.
- Offering more opportunities for committee leaders to meet to share ideas and offer support.
 - Traditionally, the Program Council meets three times a year. Because many of the committees have been relatively inactive during the pandemic, the Council only met once in the past year and not at all in the year before that.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Ed Quinlan

Committee Members: Carl Franceschi, Phil Pierce, Maryann Oldfield, Karl Heinz, Elizabeth Rosa, Carol Alper, Susanna Whitman (Interior Arrangements Committee - Mary Ann Oldfield, Amy Cicala, Jamie Turbayne)

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Committee is to maintain the facilities of First Parish in optimal condition to better support the activities of the congregation.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

- **Goal #1: Ongoing Maintenance** of the Property has been successful. The building is starting to show its age (14 years post construction) with increased cost of repairs and maintenance.
- **Goal #2: Steeple Repair** was completed last summer
- **Goal #3 Roof Replacement** was completed last summer
- **Goal #4 to establish a Capital Reserve Fund** was accomplished by way of the Capital Campaign for the Steeple and roof repairs. \$149,000 was donated by FP members. An additional \$50,000 was donated by the Town (CPA funding). The total amount raised versus spent resulted in a fund raising surplus of \$50,000. These funds were allocated to a new Capital Reserve Fund to be used for future major building projects.
- **Covid Response:** working with the Re-Opening Task Force, the property committee helped develop ventilation and filtration strategies to allow safe use of the Sanctuary, PH, and the classrooms.
- **Ongoing Interior Arrangements Subcommittee** - Oversees the Furnishings, Decorations and Signage, permanent and temporary, when requests are presented to the Property committee and when

required, authorized by the Parish Committee. These policies are listed in the FPN Facilities and Events Manual (General Building Information and Policies)

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- **Goal:** Continue to maintain the property and coordinate repairs as needed.
- **Goal:** Raise money to fund the replanting of shrubs around the office wing.
- **Goal:** Continue to utilize committee member skills in making minor repairs to the building in lieu of hiring professional contractors for simple items.

SAFE CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM

Committee Chairs: Lyn Jekowsky, Elinor Brady

Committee Members: Rev. Catie Scudera, Bob Smart

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Safe Congregation Response Team is to maintain a safe environment that protects children and adults while fostering their spiritual growth, and establishing prevention, education, and response to assure such an environment.*

Summary of goals and accomplishments

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the church was closed until January, then opened for worship in a hybrid situation in the Parish Hall.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

Goal 1: Reconvene when church reopens fully, to address membership, including orienting our new RE director to her position on the team, and to review the goals and procedures.

Goal 2: Conduct a Marshall Training/review as soon as possible after we open and settle in, including basic dangerous person information.

- Ask Carl Franceschi to give a tour of emergency exits, fire extinguisher locations, etc.
- Start advertising through group leaders in October, and then follow up.
- Lyn to include basic review of AED -location and how to use

Goal 3: Conduct an evacuation drill.

Issues:

- Definitive process to connect RE program downstairs with Sanctuary/Parish Hall at start of and during evacuation.
- Increase number of First Parish members to be trained as Marshals

Submitted by Lyn Jekowsky 3/20/22

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Committee Chair: Helen Lane and Cathy L. Livingston

Committee Members: Carol Alper, David Berman, Helen Lane, Cathy L. Livingston, Joyce McGovern, Kristin Neff, Rev. Catie Scudera, Tracy Zendzian

Mission Statement: *The Small Group Ministry (SGM) program is an active part of the ministry of First Parish, and it is one of the largest ministries within the Parish. While each participant in a Small Group Ministry may have more than one reason for participating in a group, participants cite similar reasons for joining a group. Having the opportunity to reflect on and discuss topics that can offer enrichment in our daily lives is frequently cited as a benefit of SGM membership. Participating in a SGM provides a unique opportunity to deepen our contemplative, religious, or spiritual lives through deep listening and sharing in community. Participants attribute participation in a Small Group as enhancing their spiritual and/or ethical practices and awareness.*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Goal #1 set at beginning of year: Supported the ongoing work of the existing SGMs; Facilitators met monthly to address and anticipate needs of the ongoing Small Groups

Goal #2 set at beginning of year: Promoted the benefits of joining a SGM at various times during the Church Year; Provided publicity and opportunities within the Church Year to join a SGM

Goal #3 set at beginning of year: – Recruit additional Facilitators to support opening new groups as needed

Goal #4 set at beginning of year: Created system for archiving and sharing the individual sessions with all of the Facilitators; Continued to archive and share our Sessions using Dropbox

Goal #5 set at beginning of year: Supported participants in continuing to access SGM via Zoom.

Goal #6 set at beginning of year: Explored benefits of the Parish's membership in Soul Matters, including accessing Facilitator training modules as well as archiving resources for planning SGM sessions

Other accomplishments

- Several of the facilitators implemented recommendations from Soul Matters to foster deeper listening within our sessions
- Archived available Soul Matters session plans within First Parish Dropbox

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

Goal: To continue to explore resources and options for expanding the impact of SGMs

Goal: To develop an additional model of a SGM that meets once a month but with supported activities between meetings

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Deborah Niles

Committee Members: Vicky Makrides, Marianne McGowan, Will Rico, Eleanor Rosellini, Becky Siebens, Rick Vincent, Tracy Zinner, Rev. Catie Scudera (ex officio), Jenna Crawford (ex officio)

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Social Action Committee is to:*

- *Further the work of the numerous social action subcommittees, through collaboration, brainstorming of ideas, financial support and identifying areas of intersection.*
- *Involve our church community in social justice work by communicating current activities and committee priorities, and providing opportunities for action.*

- *Help various committees and projects financially using plate collections and our social action budget.*
- *The subcommittees include:*
 - *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*
 - *Green Congregation*
 - *Generic Ministry*
 - *Immigrant Ministry*
 - *Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries*
 - *Short Term efforts such as Guest at Your Table, UU The Vote, Mother's Day Walk, etc.*
 - *Youth Group*

Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

Goal #1: Transitioned to a new Committee Chair. Deborah Niles took over from Becca Malakoff. Tracy Zinner continues to take notes, with others filling in as needed.

We continue to Hold online monthly meetings (over Zoom) on the 4th Wednesday of every month to disseminate information between individual subcommittees, increasing awareness of educational and action opportunities for social justice. In addition to the members who regularly attend meetings (listed as committee members), the SAC maintains a more expansive email list of members who received notices and minutes from the monthly meetings, as a means to stay informed about social action programs at First Parish and beyond.

• **Goal #2:** Identify charitable groups and organizations outside First Parish for us to support via various fundraising efforts. We continued to support many of the organizations that First Parish has supported in the past, and began to fund current initiatives such as Refugee Resettlement and DRUMM (see below). The SAC has designated plate collections raising funds for the numerous groups listed below from summer 2021 through March 2022:

| | |
|--|------------|
| International Institute of New England | \$515.00 |
| Needham Community Council | \$493.00 |
| Imagine Water Works | \$265.00 |
| MetroWest Worker Center | \$877.25 |
| Honor the Earth | \$151.00 |
| UUSC | \$798.02 |
| Pathways Family Shelter | \$746.00 |
| UUA Disaster Relief Fund | \$220.00 |
| Temple Beth Shalom Refugee Settlement | \$1,165.15 |
| DRUUMM | \$346.40 |
| SisterSong | \$288.00 |

• **Goal #3:** We began using a document called Year At A Glance, to identify the monthly focus of collections and church-wide social action opportunities. We determine the best way to communicate these opportunities to the congregation and to the larger community to bring about increased awareness of social justice issues and opportunities for working together towards positive change.

Other accomplishments

Continued to coordinate volunteers for other community actions- Red Cross Blood Drives, Holiday cards for incarcerated UU's, Guest at Your Table, UU The Vote, Mitten Tree, Climate Action etc.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- ***Begin the year with a Retreat** of some kind where we re-group, brainstorm priorities for the year, have time for spiritual discernment of the Social Justice needs in our community and our own individual and collective passions, etc.*
- ***Include youth and the welcoming congregation committee** if they restart - also continue to find ways to promote the activities of individual groups to the wider church.*
- ***Work with Rev. Catie to support any special projects** not under the umbrella of other groups.*
- ***Return to In-Person Meetings:** The pandemic continued to limit opportunities for in-person volunteering and gatherings. Zoom participation in Social Action Committee meetings has been steady, but people are tiring of the duration and isolation of this form of meeting. We will return to a 7pm start time and hope that we can see more participants in the coming year.*

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Committee Chairs: Phil Lynes and Rebecca Keller Scholl

Committee Members: David Berman, Peter Panov, Vickie Makrides, Jenna Crawford (intern minister, ex officio), Rev Catie Scudera (ex officio)

Mission Statement

The Worship Committee is concerned with all aspects of the worship experience. The Worship Committee works with the Minister on the design of weekly and long-term worship experience at First Parish. The Worship Committee oversees the summer component of worship and coordinates worship for Sundays when the Minister is not in attendance. The Committee works with the LRE Minister, the RE Committee, the Music Director, the technical production team, the Music Committee, the ushers team, the flower coordinator and other committees to ensure smooth functioning before, during and after each service. It also serves as a resource for the congregation to incorporate their ideas and respond to concerns about the worship experience.

Summary of goals and accomplishments

Technical Support for Zoom-based Worship and Social Hour:

Over the summer and in the early fall all our services were virtual, either entirely on Zoom and streamed to YouTube or else prerecorded to be played on YouTube and shared into a Zoom room. While Tom Gehman and Tom Pugh were producing the YouTube services the Worship Committee put together a team of volunteers who could serve as Zoom hosts for these services and we honed our skills.

In the fall the staff began to present hybrid worship services. At first these were live in the sanctuary with no parishioners but then eventually with masked and distanced in-person attendance. These were augmented with prerecorded music segments and Time For All Ages stories prepared beautifully by our new staff members, Laura, Kelvyn and Sara Elizabeth. We often had music prerecorded by the First

Parish Players or the Youth Choir as well as occasionally recordings from the web.

Rev. Catie and intern minister Jenna Crawford would recruit lay members of the congregation to do some of the liturgical segments such as the Welcome Message, unison covenant, chalice lighting and extinguishing. Occasionally there were opportunities for members to give testament to how important First Parish has been in their lives.

There was always a segment for the Joys and Concerns of the congregation during the formal worship service. However, because of the public nature of the YouTube sharing we decided to make it a regular practice to offer a second, more intimate opportunity to share during the Zoom Social Hour after the service. This was often led by the Pastoral Care Associate of the week before we created breakout rooms for small groups of four to six people to socialize for ten to fifteen minutes. We discovered that it is possible by making them cohosts to give leaders the ability to jump from room to room in order to greet more folks during this time.

Coordinate Worship in the Absence of the Minister:

The committee has worked to ensure worship is coordinated on days that the minister is not in the pulpit. This year Rev. Catie and Jenna Crawford, our intern minister, staggered their Sundays off in such a way that we only had to fill the pulpit on three Sundays with outside leadership.

- On October 17th Matt Meyer led our service with recordings from his home studio.
- On December 26th Rev. Rob Hardies led our service from his home in Washington D.C.
- On March 6th Tina Chery (The Lewis D. Brown Peace Institute) led our service from within our live Zoom room while Tom Gehman fed that to his YouTube live streaming feed.

Support Year-Round Worship:

- When the sanctuary is being used for Sunday services the committee provides a worship helper each week to ensure that the sanctuary facilities are prepared for each service and tidied afterwards. Once the hybrid services started this year we decided to merge the functions of greeters, ushers and worship helpers to serve this in-person role.
- We also participate in planning the church calendar and in the preparation of a list of suggested monthly themes for the coming year.

Organize Parish Hall (Summer) Services: Over the summer of 2021 we held online services of various forms:

- For three services we hired guest preachers and presented them live over Zoom with pre-recorded components such as music, welcome message, covenant and offering. These included one led by Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh, one led by BU Seminary student Chasity Jones, and one led by our own sponsored seminary PhD candidate Ellie del Valle.
- We had two “virtual field trip” services where we used recordings of previous services from our former intern ministers, Rev. Sally Fritche and Rev. Lucas Hergert in exchange for some of our own services led by Rev. Catie Scudera from the previous year.
- Two other “virtual field trip” services were pre recorded and used with permission from other sources. One was from the UUA General Assembly and the other was from the First Unitarian Church of Chicago, Rev. David Schwartz and Rev. Teri Schwartz.
- We held one service, the gospel singing service led by Jim and Beth Sargent and Jeanette Anderson, as a remastered and improved repeat of the service from the previous summer which had been done outside on the church lawn with some significant AV problems.
- Finally we had three services led by our own lay leaders from First Parish.
 - Peter Panov led a service about Civil Disobedience

- The Racial Justice Task Force led one about Slavery in Massachusetts
- Cathy Livingston led one about the ministry of deep conversation.

Other accomplishments

- As in previous years we hung Christmas decorations (wreaths and window candles) for the Advent season. Because the sanctuary was now being used for hybrid services with some parishioners present but masked and distanced we did hang wreaths on the side windows again and the artificial wreath in Parish Hall. We put the electric candles in the windows hung fresh wreaths with bows on the front doors.
- The Worship Committee held a virtual retreat on line in the early winter to talk about our goals, mission, and long range planning. We hope to hold another before the year is out.
- Since a lot of what we have done during the COVID 19 pandemic has been to host Zoom meetings for Sunday services, social hour, and memorial services, we reached out to get help from Vicky Makrides, Marianne McGowan and Leslie Nelkin who have become recently involved with those tasks along with Rebecca Keller Scholl, Becky Siebens, Phil Lynes and Peter Panov. Becky Siebens has recently withdrawn from Zoom hosting and we thank her for all her help during this past year.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

Goal: Help with the planning and execution of a gradual transition back towards in-person services held in the sanctuary or Parish Hall when it becomes feasible and advisable.

TREASURER & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Treasurer: Joan Meccas

Finance Committee: Joan Meccas, Erik Bailey, Sam Graves

As in past years, this report is organized into the following sections: Report on Last Year (FY21: 2020-2021), Report on Current Year (FY22: 2021-2022), and Report for Next Year (FY23: 2022-2023).

Report on Last Year (FY21: 2020–2021)

Due to the timing of our Fiscal Year (July 1 - June 30) and Annual Meeting (late May of each year), it is not possible to report on a complete fiscal year at Annual Meeting. Therefore, a brief summary is presented here of the finances from the previous year, now that they have been closed.

The year ended with an actual deficit of \$13,578 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$29,000, for a *net surplus of \$15,422*. Pledge plus Donation collection was budgeted at 95% of target (\$344K), and the final number was \$368,166 (101%). This was primarily due to exceptionally strong pledge receipts – thank you to the families who have been so generous!

Overall **Income** was significantly higher than budgeted, which is especially notable given that Parish Committee voted *not* to receive the Trustees investment income for FY21 (this was alluded to in last year's report, but the actual decision had not been made at the time the report was written). Actual Income was \$456,702 compared to Budgeted Income of \$433,286. Overall **Expenses** were likewise over budget, but not by too much. Actual Expenses were \$470,280 compared to Budgeted Expenses of \$462,286 (a \$7,994 overage).

A summary of the overall FY16 through FY21 financials is shown here; the details are always available if needed from the Treasurer. FY16-20 are the same as in past reports.

| Fiscal Year | QB Pledges Received | Pledge (P) Budget | Donations (D) Budget | P + D Total Budget | Budgeted Collection | Actual Collection |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| FY16 | \$320,976 | \$325,000 | \$13,000 | \$328,000 | 97% | 99% |
| FY17 | \$329,871 | \$340,000 | \$16,000 | \$346,000 | 97% | 100% |
| FY18 | \$332,598 | \$343,000 | \$15,000 | \$358,000 | 100% | 98% |
| FY19 | \$348,391 | \$351,000 | \$15,000 | \$366,000 | 100% | 100% |
| FY20 | \$337,898 | \$345,000 | \$15,000 | \$360,000 | 100% | 105% |
| FY21 | \$363,016 | \$349,000 | \$15,000 | \$364,000 | 95% | 101% |

| Fiscal Year | Actual P + D | Budgeted Income | Budgeted Expense | Actual Income | Actual Expense | Net Surplus / Deficit |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| FY16 | \$335,496 | \$444,937 | \$434,937 | \$466,270 | \$424,056 | \$32,213 |
| FY17 | \$357,599 | \$452,181 | \$462,181 | \$468,725 | \$457,248 | \$21,477 |
| FY18 | \$349,361 | \$485,026 | \$475,026 | \$484,420 | \$468,908 | \$5,512 |
| FY19 | \$365,670 | \$481,759 | \$491,759 | \$474,143 | \$509,649 | (\$25,507) |
| FY20 | \$377,048 | \$500,645 | \$496,173 | \$569,828 | \$514,575 | \$50,782 |
| FY21 | \$368,166 | \$433,286 | \$462,286 | \$456,702 | \$470,280 | \$15,422 |

Report on Current Year (FY22: 2021–2022)

The information contained below is based on 9 1/2 months of actual data (July 2021 through part of April 2022). *As is the case each year, final numbers will not be available until September at the earliest.*

The current church year (FY22, representing July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) has been another year with unexpected twists. Last May, as most adults were finishing off their vaccinations, we were hopeful that church life would be held in person when we returned in September. That did not occur resulting in loss of income and increased expenses and a net deficit larger than in the last 6 years.

The birds-eye view our FY22 budget is that we now anticipate:

1. a *reduction in income (~\$23,000)*
2. a *net increase in expenses (\$8700)*.
3. Thus, an anticipated *gross deficit by about ~\$31,800 for FY22.*
4. We had budgeted for a net surplus of \$8500 so this is overall an *anticipated net deficit of \$40,300.*
5. Fortunately, we have enough money in our checking account and CD (currently \$125K and \$51K, respectively) to absorb this deficit this year.

The details:

Income is currently at **\$367,833 of the \$499,964 budgeted**. The \$23,000 anticipated shortfall is for Covid-related reasons. At this time last year, we had hoped to have a full auction (\$22,000), a half season of Homegrown (\$4000), and in-person worship services throughout the year and thus our normal plate

collections (net \$13,000), but all three were curtailed. As of this report, almost \$8000 and \$6000 have been netted from the auction and plate collections.

On a positive note, Pledges are coming in at close to the expected rate, Donations have exceeded our expectations, our tenants, NCC and CRBA, have been outstanding, and other rental income has picked up considerably this Spring.

We are extremely grateful for the continuing support of Pledges and Donations from the congregation and our wonderful tenants.

Expenses are currently at **\$393,714 of the total \$491,464 budgeted**. The anticipated overrun in expenses is due in part to the following:

1. Covid-related increased costs of Worship Producer (~\$12,000 above budgeted),
2. A one-time expense due to the Website redesign (~\$6500 above budgeted)
3. Steady-state increased costs of Computer Services and Software that has not been captured in our yearly budgets and higher than typical technical support needs for computers this year (collectively ~\$6000 above budgeted).

These overruns (\$24,500) are partially off-set by the following items that we budgeted for but are not paying for this year:

4. Pension plans for DRE and Music Director (\$8400) since they are in their first year of employment;
5. Health care expenses for our Intern because Intern chose ACA instead (\$3300):
6. Childcare for RE and other events (\$1500):
7. \$2500 in contingency funds built into the budget.

These offsets (\$15,700) mitigate our overruns to an anticipated \$8800 over expense.

In combination with the shortfall our anticipated Income, we will overspend of FY22 budget by ~**\$31,800**. Since our FY22 budget was built anticipating a surplus of \$8500, this deficit puts us at ~\$40,200 less than anticipated or ~8% of our operating costs. While this ~8% variation is a larger variation than we would like, please keep in mind:

1. Last May when FY22 was approved, we were very optimistic that Covid was in the rearview mirror.
2. This is by far, the most we have been off in our budget planning in 7 years.
3. Funds in the bank (currently \$125,000 checking and \$51,000 in a CD) have been absorbing this overrun and we have been maintaining 3-4 months of operating costs.
4. Knowing these projections, we have been very intentional in preparing the FY23 budget.

Despite these hard times, there are several very positive aspects to highlight about this year and our recent and future fiscal actions:

Through our **Plate collection**, thus far we have donated nearly **\$7000 to 14 organizations**, such as Temple Beth Shalom Refugee Settlement Program, Grow Clinic, and Pathways Family Shelter. Thank you to Jane McKeon, Betty Vogel and Susanna for keeping track of the donations.

Last Fall, Ed Quinlan informed us that our **roof solar system has now paid for itself!**

The **capital campaign for the steeple and roof repairs** had ~\$50,000 surplus. Once the project is complete, the remaining funds are being set aside for capital expenses that are anticipated by the Property committee to occur in the next 2-6 years.

Report on Next Year (FY23: 2022–2023)

The budget process is rarely simple and straightforward, and this year is no exception. Limited in-person gathering, deferred budgetary needs, and the necessity of providing catch-up compensation adjustments for key staff have required creative approaches to ensuring fairness and equity. In addition, this was the first year in quite some time that we actually had a proper “Finance Committee”, rather than the work simply being done by the Treasurer, and that resulted in a few growing pains (but was overall a very worthwhile change). Despite these challenges, the FY23 budget presented here hews to our core values and is a solid framework for emerging out of the past two years of COVID into what we hope/expect to be a more normal 2022-2023 church year.

I. Income Assumptions

- A. Pledge revenue is expected to be at or close to 100% of target (payments this year have been tracking as expected, although it will be September or later before we have a full accounting for the payment percentage).
- B. Continuing our every-other-year Auction practice, there will be a *Mini-Auction* in the 2022-2023 church year (silent auction only – no live auction) where we expect to raise approximately \$6,000.
- C. Non-pledge Donations have been trending up over time, and we feel confident that we can project an increase from \$15,000 in FY22 to \$20,000 for FY23.
- D. We are delighted to have Homegrown Coffeehouse back in the budget with high confidence (their first show of this current year, and in fact the first since March of 2020, will have occurred shortly before this year’s Annual Meeting). We are projecting \$5,500 in revenue here, in the middle of their \$4,000 - \$7,000 estimate.
- E. Our primary rental tenants (Needham Children’s Center and Charles River Ballet Academy) continue as tenants at 100% rental payment amounts. Additionally, NCC’s FY23 rent reflects contractual increase tied to CPI (capped at 4.5% by language in the contract).
- F. We have made an accounting practice change for the Plate Collection line. Historically this has shown the *First Parish* portion of Plate revenue (generally 50%; although some services such as holidays and special occasions donate the full offering so First Parish receives 0% in those cases). However, this practice did not show the impact of our donations outside our congregation, due to lack of a line item for those monies. As such, the Income line has been changed to reflect the *entire* (gross) Plate receipt, and a new Expense line now reflects the outgoing charitable contributions. *Note that we have significantly underperformed on Plate collection the past two years, so the fact that this line is changing from \$12,000 to \$13,000 does not mean it is simply a small increase; it actually means we are reducing the gross receipt expectations from \$24,000 (of which First Parish was to receive \$12,000) to \$13,000 in total (of which First Parish will receive \$6,000).*

II. Expense Line Items (Non-Compensation)

- A. Expenses are generally level-funded from FY22 except as noted below.
- B. There are small changes to Building line items to account for increased costs of services.
- C. As noted above in the Income section, a new line item in Community Action reflects the *outgoing* (non-First Parish) contributions from the Plate collection.
- D. Committee budgets have remained consistent with last year, with two changes:
 1. The Fellowship budget has been zeroed out (that team has confirmed that they do not need a budget).
 2. The newly-formed DEI Committee is now funded at \$250.

- E. There have been a few changes in the Education, Music, and Office/Governance budgets:
1. Due to lower enrollment, the RE General Expense and Child Care lines have been reduced. Notably, Child Care funds teens to staff the Nursery, and if it turns out that this ends up being a significant need (and there are interested teens to staff it) this could be a target for fund restoration next year.
 2. The Music Accompanists/Singers line has been reduced by \$3,000; \$1,000 was a budget reduction and \$2,000 is a transfer that is discussed below in the Compensation section.
 3. The Computer Hardware line was reduced since there was just a new computer purchase this year and no significant purchases are expected next year.
 4. The Computer Services & Software line was increased significantly. This line has been overrun the last several years, and the expenses have consistently been in the \$4,000-\$5,000 range. As such, this is a correction to ensure that the Budget reflects actual required spending.
 5. Parish Committee has reduced its own budget from \$600 to \$450.
 6. Postage, Publicity, and Website Expense have been slightly increased to reflect actual spending requirements.

III. Staff and Compensation

- A. Due to new hiring for this past church year, much of the staff compensation numbers are roughly consistent with our guidelines (which target the Midpoint of the UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines).
- B. The *current* compensation for all staff relative to the most recent UUA guidelines for next year (Geo Index 6 for Mid-Sized I using 2022-2023 numbers, ref: https://www.uua.org/files/2022-01/salary_recs_22-23_geo6.pdf):
1. **Minister** (Full-Time): \$83,700 (Min), \$98,400 (Mid), \$119,600 (Max). Current compensation is \$87,350 (89% of Mid)
 2. **DLRE** (Full-Time): \$48,300 (Min), \$56,800 (Mid), \$65,300 (Max). Current compensation is \$56,000 (99% of Mid)
 3. **Parish Administrator** (6/7 Time): \$42,514 (Min), \$49,971 (Mid), \$57,343 (Max). Current compensation is \$43,915 (88% of Mid)
 4. **Music Director** (1/2 Time): \$24,150 (Min), \$28,400 (Mid), \$34,400 (Max). Current compensation is \$29,000 (102% of Mid)
 5. **Accompanist** (there is not a direct mapping of this role to the UUA guidelines)
 6. **Sexton and Cleaner**: \$16/hr (Min), \$19/hr (Mid), \$21/hr (Max). Current compensation is \$20/hr for Sexton and \$21/hr for Cleaner (both above Mid)
- C. The proposed budget includes raises for four positions as follows (the goal was to address the staff members who were significantly out of alignment with the Midpoint compensation guidelines):
1. Rev. Catie will receive a 3.0% raise (\$2,650/year) to bring her compensation to \$90,000 (91% of Mid)
 2. Susanna will receive a 3.0% raise (\$1,325/year) to bring her compensation to \$45,240 (91% of Mid)
 3. Kelvyn will receive a \$2,000 increase (funded entirely through reduction in the Music Accompanists/Singers, so no overall budgetary impact) to bring their compensation to \$8,055.
 4. Our new Intern Minister (Darrah Bryans) will receive \$13,300, which is an increase over our current Intern Minister (this increase was expected based on UUA recommendations, and was noted in last year's Annual Report).
- D. The Worship A/V Producer line is expected to return to its pre-pandemic 3 hours per week schedule, with an expectation of one service every six weeks requiring additional production time (such as prerecorded components).

- E. The Health Benefit and Insurance lines have been updated to reflect expected expenses (including new spousal benefits where appropriate) for Sara Elizabeth, Laura, and Susanna.

IV. UUA Dues

- A. There is a significant change in our proposed payments to the denomination (both the UUA and the New England Region).
1. Our contribution request from the UUA for FY23 is \$27,049 (up from \$26,827 last year), and this budget proposes funding this at the **85%** level (\$22,992). Note that we have been paying at the 100% level for many years (although previously there were years where it was less than 100%). *A key rationale for this reduction is the fact that we feel a responsibility to our staff and their own compensation, which has lagged behind where we hoped it would be; this change distributes the payments more equitably.*
 2. On a *per-member* basis, our dues have increased from \$79/member in FY16 to \$109/member in FY22. Membership has stayed roughly constant during this time. *Note that the UUA changed its contribution calculation formula for the 2018-2019 church year (this was described in the 2017-2018 Annual Report), which resulted in significantly higher assessments compared to the previous formula.*
 3. The requested sum from the UUA would be \$110/member for FY23 if paid in full. The *proposed* payment of 85% of this amount (per the FY23 Budget) would be **\$93/member**, which still compares favorably to past years.
 4. We understand that the UUA is sufficiently funded to be able to absorb lower payments for next year (and in fact are anticipating many congregations taking a similar approach that we are proposing), and this reduction will not impact the services and support we receive from the UUA and the New England Region.
- B. The proposed staff compensation increases and UUA Dues decreases, taken together, show a close correlation:
- A. From FY16 to Proposed FY23, Rev. Catie's and Susanna's compensations will have increased 15% and 19%, respectively.
 - B. If we were to pay the full requested FY23 dues to the UUA, it would represent a 39% increase over FY16, significantly above the staff compensation levels.
 - C. The proposed 85% level represents a 18% increase over FY16, in line with the compensation increases for our staff.

FY23 Budget

The tables on the following pages provide first a high-level view of the budget on the first page (all income lines and a summary of the expense lines), and then complete expense detail per category on subsequent pages. This budget was approved by the Parish Committee at its April 27, 2022 meeting.

As has become established practice, First Parish budgets alternate between a Surplus and a Deficit due to the biennial Auction. The expected Deficit this year has been set to \$(8,500), consistent with the \$8,500 Surplus budgeted for FY22.

We extend our gratitude to the membership of the congregation for its generosity and commitment to First Parish, and to the dedicated staff for keeping everything running smoothly during this challenging time.

| | | FY21 Actual | FY22 Budget | FY23 Proposed | Variance |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Income | | | | | |
| Income | | | | | |
| | Pledges | \$363,016 | \$347,000 | \$340,000 | -\$7,000 |
| | Donations | \$16,791 | \$15,000 | \$20,000 | \$5,000 |
| | Fundraising | \$7,264 | \$22,000 | \$6,000 | -\$16,000 |
| | Homegrown Coffee House | \$344 | \$4,000 | \$5,500 | \$1,500 |
| | Investment Income | \$10 | \$13,500 | \$15,394 | \$1,894 |
| | Fourth Century Fund Youth Income | \$0 | \$11,500 | \$12,846 | \$1,346 |
| | Plate - First Parish Collection | \$6,755 | \$12,000 | \$13,000 | \$1,000 |
| | Bldg Rent – NCC | \$42,053 | \$49,964 | \$52,212 | \$2,248 |
| | Bldg Rent – Ballet | \$23,361 | \$23,000 | \$25,000 | \$2,000 |
| | Bldg Rent – Misc | \$0 | \$2,000 | \$3,000 | \$1,000 |
| | Total Income | \$456,702 | \$499,964 | \$492,952 | -\$7,012 |
| Total Income | | \$456,702 | \$499,964 | \$492,952 | -\$7,012 |
| Expense | | | | | |
| | Total Building | \$88,132 | \$95,018 | \$95,706 | \$688 |
| | Total Community Outreach | \$500 | \$1,500 | \$8,500 | \$7,000 |
| | Total Community Within | \$639 | \$3,750 | \$3,750 | \$0 |
| | Total Education | \$71,364 | \$85,544 | \$84,483 | -\$1,061 |
| | Total Ministry | \$154,716 | \$140,116 | \$146,093 | \$5,977 |
| | Total Music | \$42,412 | \$52,355 | \$52,277 | -\$78 |
| | Total Office/Governance Expenses | \$84,788 | \$83,200 | \$86,870 | \$3,670 |
| | Total Denominational Affairs | \$26,479 | \$27,427 | \$23,592 | -\$3,835 |
| | Total Other Expenses | \$1,251 | \$2,554 | \$182 | -\$2,372 |
| Total Expense | | \$470,280 | \$491,464 | \$501,453 | \$9,988 |
| Net Income | | -\$13,578 | \$8,500 | -\$8,500 | -\$17,000 |

| | | | FY21 Actual | FY22 Budget | FY23 Proposed | Variance |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Income | | | | | |
| | Income | | | | | |
| | | Pledges | \$363,016 | \$347,000 | \$340,000 | -\$7,000 |
| | | Donations | \$16,791 | \$15,000 | \$20,000 | \$5,000 |
| | | Fundraising | \$7,264 | \$22,000 | \$6,000 | -\$16,000 |
| | | Homegrown Coffee House | \$344 | \$4,000 | \$5,500 | \$1,500 |
| | | Investment Income | \$10 | \$13,500 | \$15,394 | \$1,894 |
| | | Fourth Century Fund Youth Income | \$0 | \$11,500 | \$12,846 | \$1,346 |
| | | Plate - First Parish Collection | \$6,755 | \$12,000 | \$13,000 | \$1,000 |
| | | Bldg Rent - NCC | \$42,053 | \$49,964 | \$52,212 | \$2,248 |
| | | Bldg Rent - Ballet | \$23,361 | \$23,000 | \$25,000 | \$2,000 |
| | | Bldg Rent - Misc | \$0 | \$2,000 | \$3,000 | \$1,000 |
| | | Total Income | \$456,702 | \$499,964 | \$492,952 | -\$7,012 |
| | Total Income | | \$456,702 | \$499,964 | \$492,952 | -\$7,012 |
| | Expense | | | | | |
| | Building | | | | | |
| | | Building Staff | | | | |
| | | Sexton Comp | \$9,757 | \$9,000 | \$9,000 | \$0 |
| | | Sexton Payroll Tax | \$746 | \$720 | \$720 | \$0 |
| | | Cleaner Comp | \$3,117 | \$9,450 | \$9,450 | \$0 |
| | | Cleaner Payroll Tax | \$238 | \$756 | \$756 | \$0 |
| | | Electricity | \$2,181 | \$3,800 | \$4,400 | \$600 |
| | | Gas | \$3,491 | \$3,600 | \$3,600 | \$0 |
| | | Water Sewer | \$1,663 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$0 |
| | | Landscaping | \$2,511 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$0 |
| | | Snow Removal | \$1,525 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$0 |

| | | | FY21 Actual | FY22 Budget | FY23 Proposed | Variance |
|--|--|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| | | Maintenance | \$17,376 | \$16,000 | \$16,000 | \$0 |
| | | Repairs | \$4,261 | \$7,000 | \$7,000 | \$0 |
| | | Waste Removal | \$552 | \$500 | \$588 | \$88 |
| | | Capital Campaign Mortgage | \$30,434 | \$25,364 | \$25,364 | \$0 |
| | | Insurance | \$10,280 | \$9,328 | \$9,328 | \$0 |
| | | Total Building | \$88,132 | \$95,018 | \$95,706 | \$688 |
| | | Community Outreach | | | | |
| | | Social Action Committee | \$500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$0 |
| | | Plate Collection Outreach | | | \$7,000 | \$7,000 |
| | | Total Community Outreach | \$500 | \$1,500 | \$8,500 | \$7,000 |
| | | Community Within | | | | |
| | | Archive | \$12 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 |
| | | Fellowship | \$0 | \$250 | \$0 | -\$250 |
| | | Green Congregation | \$0 | \$250 | \$250 | \$0 |
| | | Hospitality | \$0 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$0 |
| | | Membership | \$0 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 |
| | | Pastoral Care | \$439 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 |
| | | DEI | | | \$250 | \$250 |
| | | Small Group Ministry | \$188 | \$250 | \$250 | \$0 |
| | | Total Community Within | \$639 | \$3,750 | \$3,750 | \$0 |
| | | Education | | | | |
| | | DRE Comp | \$48,969 | \$56,000 | \$56,000 | \$0 |
| | | DRE Payroll Tax | \$3,518 | \$4,480 | \$4,480 | \$0 |
| | | DRE Health Benefits | \$5,903 | \$5,364 | \$5,607 | \$243 |
| | | DRE Insurance | -\$776 | \$800 | \$1,246 | \$446 |
| | | DRE Pension | \$4,775 | \$5,600 | \$5,600 | \$0 |
| | | DRE Professional Expenses | \$3,408 | \$5,600 | \$5,600 | \$0 |

| | | | | FY21 Actual | FY22 Budget | FY23 Proposed | Variance |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | | | RE Admin Support | \$1,280 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| | | | RE Admin Support Payroll Tax | \$98 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| | | | Youth Group Advisor Service Trip | \$750 | \$750 | \$750 | \$0 |
| | | | RE General Expense | \$2,354 | \$3,500 | \$2,500 | -\$1,000 |
| | | | Child Care | \$0 | \$1,500 | \$750 | -\$750 |
| | | | Adult Education | \$188 | \$250 | \$250 | \$0 |
| | | | Lay Leadership Development | \$240 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$0 |
| | | | Youth Group Expense | \$657 | \$700 | \$700 | \$0 |
| | | | Total Education | \$71,364 | \$85,544 | \$84,483 | -\$1,061 |
| | | | Ministry | | | | |
| | | | Minister Comp | \$91,342 | \$87,350 | \$90,000 | \$2,650 |
| | | | In Lieu of FICA | \$6,426 | \$6,682 | \$6,885 | \$203 |
| | | | Minister Health Benefits | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| | | | Minister Insurance | \$1,391 | \$1,700 | \$1,700 | \$0 |
| | | | Minister Pension | \$8,400 | \$8,735 | \$9,000 | \$265 |
| | | | Minister Professional Expenses | \$4,041 | \$8,735 | \$9,000 | \$265 |
| | | | Minister Discretionary Fund | \$1,951 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$0 |
| | | | Student Minister Comp | \$11,200 | \$12,200 | \$13,300 | \$1,100 |
| | | | Student Minister Payroll Tax | \$857 | \$976 | \$1,064 | \$88 |
| | | | Student Minister Health Benefits | \$1,404 | \$3,330 | \$3,330 | \$0 |
| | | | Student Minister Professional Exp | \$1,143 | \$1,220 | \$1,330 | \$110 |
| | | | Worship Café A/V Comp | \$21,630 | \$3,600 | \$4,800 | \$1,200 |
| | | | Worship Café A/V Payroll Tax | \$1,655 | \$288 | \$384 | \$96 |
| | | | Worship Committee | | | | |
| | | | Guest Ministers | \$945 | \$2,000 | \$2,000 | \$0 |

| | | | | FY21 Actual | FY22 Budget | FY23 Proposed | Variance |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------|
| | | | Worship Committee Expense | \$1,019 | \$800 | \$300 | -\$500 |
| | | | Total Worship Committee | \$1,964 | \$2,800 | \$2,300 | -\$500 |
| | | | Flowers | \$0 | \$0 | \$500 | \$500 |
| | | | Summer Pastoral Care | \$1,313 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$0 |
| | | | Total Ministry | \$154,716 | \$140,116 | \$146,093 | \$5,977 |
| | | | Music | | | | |
| | | | Music Director Comp | \$26,469 | \$28,700 | \$28,700 | \$0 |
| | | | Music Director Payroll Tax | \$2,008 | \$2,296 | \$2,296 | \$0 |
| | | | Music Director Health Benefits | \$1,184 | \$2,750 | \$3,591 | \$841 |
| | | | Music Director Insurance | \$187 | \$700 | \$621 | -\$79 |
| | | | Music Director Pension | \$926 | \$2,870 | \$2,870 | \$0 |
| | | | Youth Music Director Comp | \$6,850 | \$6,055 | \$8,055 | \$2,000 |
| | | | Youth Music Director Payroll Tax | \$524 | \$484 | \$644 | \$160 |
| | | | Music Accompanists/Singers | \$3,070 | \$5,000 | \$2,000 | -\$3,000 |
| | | | Music Expenses | \$1,194 | \$3,500 | \$3,500 | \$0 |
| | | | Total Music | \$42,412 | \$52,355 | \$52,277 | -\$78 |
| | | | Office/Governance Expenses | | | | |
| | | | Admin Comp | \$45,971 | \$43,915 | \$45,240 | \$1,325 |
| | | | Admin Payroll Tax | \$3,883 | \$3,513 | \$3,619 | \$106 |
| | | | Admin Health Benefits | \$4,792 | \$5,280 | \$4,792 | -\$488 |
| | | | Admin Insurance | \$727 | \$900 | \$873 | -\$27 |
| | | | Admin Pension | \$4,243 | \$4,392 | \$4,524 | \$132 |
| | | | Admin Professional Expenses | \$0 | \$600 | \$600 | \$0 |
| | | | Bookkeeper Comp | \$1,741 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$0 |
| | | | Bank and Credit Fees | \$2,250 | \$2,000 | \$2,000 | \$0 |
| | | | Office Equipment & Copier | \$3,987 | \$5,500 | \$5,500 | \$0 |

| | | | FY21 Actual | FY22 Budget | FY23 Proposed | Variance |
|--|-------------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Computer Hardware | \$350 | \$1,000 | \$500 | -\$500 |
| | | Computer Services & Software | \$5,242 | \$1,500 | \$4,000 | \$2,500 |
| | | Parish Committee | \$0 | \$600 | \$450 | -\$150 |
| | | Payroll Fees | \$643 | \$600 | \$600 | \$0 |
| | | Postage | \$1,486 | \$750 | \$900 | \$150 |
| | | Publicity | \$973 | \$600 | \$800 | \$200 |
| | | Supplies | \$3,687 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$0 |
| | | Telephone/Internet | \$4,211 | \$4,000 | \$4,272 | \$272 |
| | | Website Expense | \$600 | \$750 | \$900 | \$150 |
| | | Stewardship | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| | | Human Resources & Recruiting | \$0 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 |
| | | Total Office/Governance Expenses | \$84,788 | \$83,200 | \$86,870 | \$3,670 |
| | | Denominational Affairs | | | | |
| | | Dues - UUA and New England Reg | \$25,459 | \$26,827 | \$22,992 | -\$3,835 |
| | | General Assembly | \$1,020 | \$600 | \$600 | \$0 |
| | | Total Denominational Affairs | \$26,479 | \$27,427 | \$23,592 | -\$3,835 |
| | | Other Expenses | | | | |
| | | Capital Purchases | \$1,251 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| | | Contingency | \$0 | \$2,554 | \$182 | -\$2,372 |
| | | Total Other Expenses | \$1,251 | \$2,554 | \$182 | -\$2,372 |
| | | Total Expense | \$470,280 | \$491,464 | \$501,453 | \$9,988 |
| | Net Income | | -\$13,578 | \$8,500 | -\$8,500 | -\$17,000 |

AUDITOR'S REPORT
Fiscal Year 2021-2022
Auditor: Phil Griffith

May 2, 2022

To the Members of First Parish Needham,

As a member of First Parish, and appointed auditor for this fiscal year, I have reviewed the records and financial reports of First Parish in Needham for this year.

The review included inspection of income and expense reports, monthly reconciliation reports, and bank statements. I also reviewed monthly payroll reports and several transactions including mortgage payments, utilities, and other expenses, noting all are up to date and documented. Insurance documentation for the church and regular renters of the church were examined and are current.

While this audit would not necessarily disclose all errors, I found no evidence of errors in the records. I have submitted a more detailed report available to the Parish Committee.

My inspection and report are not meant to be construed as an audit and opinion rendered by a Certified Public Accountant.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Griffith

TRUSTEES OF INVESTED FUNDS
2021-2022 Fiscal Year

Trustees Chairs: Philip Murray (term ending June 30, 2022)

Trustees: Chris Pooley (6/30/2023), Katie Barnett (6/30/2024), with continued support from Robert Rands.

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Trustees of Invested Funds is to oversee all First Parish endowment funds, to make changes in investments as they deem appropriate, and to make distribution of endowment funds in accordance with Article VIII (section 6) of the Church By-laws.*

Summary of goals and accomplishments

- Prudent and fiduciary appropriate selection of investments that consider risk, return, and UU values.
- Periodically review endowment performance with appropriate benchmarks and adjust asset allocation in accordance with market return and risk expectations.
- Maintain sufficient cash to fund approved disbursement requests from purpose restricted funds and to provide for annual distribution from General and Buehrens endowments as approved by the Parish Committee.

Looking ahead — preliminary goals and issues for next year

- Adjust investment allocations in accordance with market forecasts and recommendations of appropriate sources of investment guidance and analysis.
- Fulfill mission as stated above.
- **Issues:** Volatility of market and performance is an unknown and could impact amount of distribution available from General and Buehrens endowments.
- If the Parish Committee reviews the church finances and decides that a distribution from the General and / or Buehrens Fund the maximum allowed amount for FY22, in accordance with the By-laws would be \$14,775 and \$12,369 respectively.

| First Parish in Needham - Endowment Funds | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Consolidated - Cash, Investments, and Loan | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total | FPC Pledges | FPC Endowment | General | Buehrens | Lane Lyceum | Memorial | Music | Ministerial Settlement | |
| Fiscal Year Reporting - July 1 - June 30 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Balance, July 1, 2020 | 905,276.51 | 5,398.73 | 899,877.78 | 318,168.16 | 239,027.92 | 53,580.41 | 34,438.62 | 54,662.67 | 200,000.00 | |
| Additions | 31,327.77 | 21,404.77 | 9,923.00 | 8,000.00 | - | 150.00 | 243.00 | 1,530.00 | - | |
| Withdrawals | (29,100.61) | (26,803.50) | (2,297.11) | - | - | - | (292.11) | (2,005.00) | - | |
| Transfers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Dividends | 10,225.07 | - | 10,225.07 | 5,755.11 | 2,799.19 | 627.99 | 403.29 | 639.49 | - | |
| Income / Investment Change | 197,908.80 | - | 197,908.80 | 90,218.71 | 67,388.83 | 15,112.29 | 9,718.73 | 15,470.24 | - | |
| Balance, June 30, 2021 | 1,115,637.54 | 0.00 | 1,115,637.54 | 422,141.98 | 309,215.94 | 69,470.69 | 44,511.53 | 70,297.40 | 200,000.00 | |
| Performance Review as of 6/30/21 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Period Perf | Qtr Perf | Calendar YTD | Fiscal Year | | | | |
| | | | Endow x Min Loan | 0.680% | 4.707% | 10.445% | 29.356% | 12.976% | 13.104% | |
| | | | Total Endow | 0.557% | 3.833% | 8.410% | 22.899% | 9.808% | 9.795% | |
| | | | UUCEF (Net) = | 0.900% | 5.000% | 7.000% | 27.300% | 11.100% | 11.100% | |
| | Per Fidelity | | | | | | | | | |
| | | FPC account | 0.68% | 4.75% | 10.42% | 29.46% | 11.46% | 9.30% | | |
| | | Index Blend (70/30) | 1.28% | 5.67% | 8.86% | 27.94% | 12.86% | 12.07% | | |
| | | S&P 500 | 2.33% | 8.55% | 15.25% | 40.79% | 18.67% | 17.65% | | |
| | | DJ US Total | 2.53% | 8.29% | 15.27% | 44.29% | 18.69% | 17.86% | | |
| | | MSCI ACWI ex USA | -0.64% | 5.53% | 9.27% | 35.91% | 9.55% | 11.26% | | |
| | | Barclays US Agg | 0.70% | 1.83% | -1.60% | -0.33% | 5.34% | 3.03% | | |
| | Amount available for FY22, if approved by FPC | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Spending rate times 6/30 MV | | 3.50% | 4.00% | | | | | |
| | | Maximum amount available | | 14,775.00 | 12,369.00 | | | | | |
| Annual Reporting - April 1 - March 31 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Balance, April 1, 2021 | 1,066,757.69 | - | 1,066,757.69 | 394,820.18 | 295,528.93 | 66,245.66 | 42,579.18 | 67,583.74 | 200,000.00 | |
| Additions | 49,128.66 | 39,205.66 | 9,923.00 | 8,000.00 | - | 150.00 | 243.00 | 1,530.00 | - | |
| Withdrawals | (41,502.77) | (39,205.66) | (2,297.11) | - | - | - | (292.11) | (2,005.00) | - | |
| Transfers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Dividends | 13,399.56 | - | 13,399.56 | 7,475.92 | 3,711.12 | 833.77 | 534.32 | 844.43 | - | |
| Income / Investment Change | 17,615.16 | - | 17,615.16 | 8,037.65 | 5,946.33 | 1,335.96 | 867.08 | 1,428.14 | - | |
| Balance, March 31, 2022 | 1,105,398.30 | - | 1,105,398.30 | 418,333.75 | 305,186.38 | 68,565.39 | 43,931.47 | 69,381.31 | 200,000.00 | |
| Performance Review as of 3/31/22 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Period Perf | Qtr Perf | Calendar YTD | Fiscal Year | | | | |
| | | | Endow x Min Loan | 0.843% | -4.931% | -4.931% | 3.502% | 11.438% | 10.886% | |
| | | | Total Endow | 0.689% | -4.075% | -4.075% | 2.856% | 8.785% | 7.858% | |
| | | | UUCEF (Net) = | | | | | | | - not available at press time |
| | Per Fidelity | | | | | | | | | |
| | | FPC account | 0.84% | -4.95% | -4.95% | 3.65% | 10.36% | 9.03% | | |
| | | Index Blend (70/30) | 0.94% | -5.22% | -5.22% | 4.35% | 11.13% | 9.73% | | |
| | | S&P 500 | 3.71% | -4.60% | -4.60% | 15.65% | 18.92% | 15.99% | | |
| | | DJ US Total | 3.24% | -5.40% | -5.40% | 11.67% | 18.12% | 15.31% | | |
| | | MSCI ACWI ex USA | 0.20% | -5.40% | -5.40% | -1.33% | 7.68% | 6.94% | | |
| | | Barclays US Agg | -2.78% | -5.93% | -5.93% | -4.15% | 1.69% | 2.14% | | |