

## **The Worship Committee**

The Worship Committee works with the ministerial staff to design the form of worship at First Parish. It represents the congregation, gathering responses from members and synthesizing the diversity of interests. The goal is to create effective and consistently engaging spiritual experiences.

### Tasks/Responsibilities

The Committee focuses on four major areas: designing Sunday worship, consulting on special services, coordinating lay participation and organizing summer services. Details appear in the following paragraphs.

#### Sunday Services

The Committee collaborates with the Senior Minister to define the order of service for Sunday worship and to discuss elements to include or leave out. The congregation has a variety of viewpoints and preferences, some of them contradictory. It is important to find a balance between the various ideas. The over-riding aim of Sunday worship is to create a sacred space, distinct from the ordinary world, which leads to experience and insight that can be carried into that world.

#### Special Services

In addition to the usual Sunday services, the Committee helps design worship for special events, including Homecoming Sunday, Christmas Eve, Child Dedication, Flower Communion and services of transition.

#### Lay Participation

We have lay members participating in each Sunday service, doing Announcements, Chalice Lighting, Covenant and Responsive Reading. The announcements are read by a leader or member of a church committee, and there is frequently a Spotlight, which focuses on a particular group or activity. The covenant is often read by a young person, either from Coming of Age group or the Youth Group. The chalice and responsive reading are done by other members or friends of the congregation.

A member of the committee (the designated Worship Associate of the week) coordinates each of these four areas.

In addition, we organize lay-led services. Groups at First Parish can submit an application for a service. If accepted, they receive a liaison from the Worship Committee who coordinates the preparations.

## Summer Services

The ministerial staff is on vacation during the summer, usually for eight weeks, and the Worship Committee organizes the summer services. Sometimes we have lay-led services. More often, we hire guest ministers. We have established the role of Worship Associate, who assists in the service, filling the roles described above for lay participants.

## Structure:

The Committee consists of six members, who must be members in good standing of First Parish. Terms are three years in length, and two new members begin their terms in September. The schedule for terms on this committee begins in September so that new members will have experience when summer arrives, an especially busy season for Worship.

The Chair is someone in his or her third year of service and is selected by agreement of the members of the committee. One member (not the Chair) serves as Clerk, who records the decisions of the committee and writes the minutes of the meetings.

During the church year, the members meet each month on the fourth Tuesday in the Chapel. Attending are the Ministers and the Music Director.