



**First Parish in Cambridge**  
First Church in Cambridge,  
Unitarian Universalist  
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## **ANNUAL REPORT BOOKLET 2015 - 2016**

### **Our Mission**

*Awakened by worship,  
nourished by tradition,  
and united by love,  
we strive to create a multicultural,  
spirit-filled community that works for justice,  
fosters spiritual curiosity and faith formation,  
shares joy, heals brokenness,  
and celebrates the sacred in all.*

*We welcome people of all beliefs, ages, classes, colors,  
ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities  
and expressions.*

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## **Interim Minister**

When I arrived at First Parish in October I spent time interviewing lay leaders of the congregation and staff. What emerged were a number of concerns that I believed pointed toward a conclusion.

First the concerns:

- 1.) First Parish had been on a size plateau for decades. Hovering between 180 and 240 members, First Parish did not seem to be able "to hold" on to its membership. People joined but only those who found "a place" in the congregation's committee structures seemed to stay. Church dynamics students call this growth by adoption.
- 2.) First Parish was experiencing more than ordinary lay leadership "burnout."
- 3.) Members of the Standing Committee had received a report from the outgoing minister that said that it was difficult to "staff" the various committees of the congregation. There was some resistance to volunteering.
- 4.) Members of the Standing Committee reported that too many decisions came to the Standing Committee. Many of these referrals involved committees seeking permission to perform functions that were part of their mandates. Many of these referrals involved committees asking the Standing Committee to solve some problem in their work. Some of the referrals involved conflicts, indicating that the Standing Committee was being seen as dispute court.
- 5.) My interviews also indicated that the staff experienced themselves as bypassed and under-utilized as problem solvers. Members of the staff did not experience themselves as being treated as religious professionals, capable of planning initiatives and coordinating the many ministries of the congregation. Staff experienced themselves being regarded as servants rather than as servant leaders. The staff found that work came to them planned by some committee without input by the staff and they pointed out that this led to them as being re-active rather than being pro-active.

### **Pastoral to Program Shift.**

These concerns led to this conclusion; First Parish had become too large to function as a pastoral-size church (a congregation that is centered around a minister.) Looking at the record and subsequent interviews revealed that the congregation reached this "too large" stage decades ago. But it had never adapted its way of operating to a program-sized congregation. (A program-sized congregation, sometimes called a multi-celled congregation, has multiple activities (programs) through which members participate and find community with each other. These multiple activities (programs) find coherence because they are all united in trying to realize a common mission.

Most notably its governance structure had evolved decades ago, and it was no longer appropriate to the size, or the mission, vision, and program initiatives that First Parish had been making in the last decades.

How and who were responsible for making what kinds of decisions needed to clarified. Decisions about vision, mission, and how to realize that mission belonged to the whole congregation and to its elected Standing Committee. But, too much of its time was taken up in conflicts and solving problems of committees. Standing Committee needed to delegate the day-to-day decisions about building, vendor procurement, supervision of support staff, and for supporting the many ministries of First Parish to the staff team led by the minister. This delegation of responsibility would be guided by clear policies that mandated what would be done, and how. Then the Standing Committee needed to monitor the work of the minister and the professional staff.

Clear delegation would allow the Standing Committee to partner with the minister and professional staff to do long-range planning and visioning, so that First Parish would move in an intentional way toward realizing its mission. Clear delegation would allow us to use the full resources offered by our professional staff, whose capacity to aid in planning had not been enabled and encouraged in the past. Many congregations fail to make the pastoral to program shift, and the “200 member plateau” is a well established symptom of being “stuck.” It takes intention and commitment by both the elected leadership and the staff to lead the congregation to a new culture of shared ministry and shared governance. Without intention and commitment human communities like living organisms tend to “snap back” to their old and familiar way of coping.

Because of this requirement for a clear understanding by the Standing Committee and the staff of their roles in maintaining the status quo, and because of the requirement to have a clarity about the adaptive change we were embarking on, we have spent considerable time this year in studying and finding solutions that move us forward. Both the Standing Committee and the Staff Team have read Dan Hotchkiss’ book, *Governance and Ministry; Rethinking Board Leadership* and discussed the implications of this approach.

We took these steps toward clarifying Governance and Ministry:

- 1.) The Standing Committee hosted a conversation with congregational leaders in January to share their thinking, asking what would be the role of the next settled minister in enabling the shared ministries of the congregation and how could the Standing Committee do more visioning and planning and less micromanagement.
- 2.) The Standing Committee held three “Congregational Conversations” in preparation for the search that helped the congregation to join in the articulation of their expectations for the next settled minister as team leader who could help develop the ministries at First Parish, ministries which would allow more and more members “find a place” within the shared ministry of First Parish.

- 3.) The Standing Committee has appointed a Task Force on Governance that will work to help the Standing Committee develop a vision of governance and some initial policies.
- 4.) The Staff has become a team. By discussing together their work in supporting and resourcing the many ministries of First Parish, they have learned that together they are creative and proactive religious professionals and have developed a practice that reflects that understanding.
- 5.) The Staff has aided the Standing Committee by helping to give proactive leadership and coherent reporting on personnel and finances. The Staff is now involved in working with the Standing Committee on a Vision of Ministry so that the Standing Committee's goals and the Staff Team's goals for 2016-2017 will be both congruent and shared.

Much work needs remains to be done, but with a clear vision and a successful search for settled minister I am confident that First Parish will complete the turn toward a program-sized church with an empowered shared ministry guided by mission and governed by proactive and intentional process

**Rev. Clyde Grubbs  
Interim Minister**

## **Director of Religious Education**

This year, we offered the following curriculum in age-based groups.

**Nursery care is available every Sunday for children ages 0-4.**

### **JK-1: Spirit Play**

Spirit Play is a religious education method, based on the work of Jerome Berryman and Maria Montessori, that helps children explore questions of the spirit: Where did we come from? What are we doing here? How do we choose to live our lives? What happens when we die?

Spirit Play uses a ritual that includes music, a weekly spiritual story to explore, feasting, and then lets children make real choices for themselves in a teacher-prepared environment about how to understand and integrate the story into their own lives.

Spirit Play is a Unitarian Universalist version of Godly Play, developed by Dr. Nita Penfold and Beverly Leute Bruce.

### **2-3: Moral Tales**

Moral Tales attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools they will need to make choices and take actions reflective of their Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. These sessions introduce tools for discerning truth and justice in a complex world. Participants are encouraged to draw upon inner resources such as conscience, intuition and empathy; spiritual resources such as faith, prayer and forgiveness; and external resources that include wise teachers and the larger community. Participants explore responsibility, courage, persistence and cooperation. The aim of Moral Tales is to help raise children who have been provided with tools that will help them to discern what is right and true, to hear and follow the call of Love, and to turn their moral beliefs and ethical concerns into concrete action.

Moral Tales is a Tapestry of Faith program from the UUA.

### **4-5: Bibleodeon**

In Bibleodeon participants don't just read but experience great stories of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. They encounter a crime scene that tells the story of Cain and Abel. They face down the temptation of candy. They conduct BIBWAN - a Bible Women's Award Night. They construct masks of animals that didn't make it on to the ark, and they perform 11 original playlets.

Bibleodeon is a component of the Shelter Rock Faith Curriculum.

## **Youth Programs**

### **6-8: Building Bridges**

Building Bridges is a world religions program to deepen youth's understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. Youth enjoy visits to many houses of worship as they explore and compare the world religions that are one of Unitarian Universalism's founding Sources. At First Parish in Cambridge, we are blessed to have rich cultural resources that allowed us to have a different Resident Expert visit the group, share their upbringing or current practices, and co-lead each unit exploring different faiths.

Building Bridges is a UUA Tapestry of Faith program.

### **9-12: Youth Group**

High schoolers are eligible to join the Youth Group at First Parish. Their self-selected programs follow a monthly rotation of service, fellowship, worship and education activities. Youth Group activities encourage the leadership of participants in choices, planning, and facilitation, helping members develop their personal strengths and their UU identity. Programs include volunteering at Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, hosting lunch fundraisers for the congregation, overnight lock-ins and regional Youth Cons, hosting the annual Easter Egg hunt, creating congregational worship, and the Walk for Hunger.

This year's registration reported to the UUA was 69, and our average attendance was 26.4. We welcomed 3 new families and Bridged 4 high school seniors to the Young Adult community in a bittersweet ceremony in May.

This year in response to teacher requests for more consistent time with the children and youth they served, we eliminated the monthly Ingathering (children's worship). This also allowed me to streamline my tasks and give more attention to multigenerational worship production. Attendance went up on those Sundays and teachers are enjoying better consistency with their groups. We do want to address the lost opportunity for explicit teaching which newcomers and young children found helpful, by adding scaffolding on how and why to pray, to sing, etc. to multigenerational worships.

## **Personnel**

Sarah Napoline served as interim DRE in November and December while I took a personal leave for family health reasons. RE Assistant Colleen Vickers, intern from Emmanuel College, was with us half the year. Youth Coordinator Myra LalDin served us for one year. Child Care Coordinators Lace Campbell, Jeremy Schwartz, and Alia Campbell continue. Bruce Leslie-Pritchard finished his term as RE Chair and Carrie Fisher is the new chair. This transition coincides with our governance shift, as we develop and reorganize the RE Committee into a Council with age-based portfolios and a special needs portfolio.

## **Spirit Play**

This fall we piloted the Spirit Play curriculum for ages 4-6. Spirit Play combines the Montessori approach of child-led learning in a teacher-prepared environment with lessons from important spiritual stories selected by our own community. The Spirit Play team selected a year's worth of stories through a strong collaborative process with the congregation, parents/guardians of participants, and the teaching team. We then invited the congregation to help us create story baskets of figurines for each story, a significant investment of time, talent and resources. Almost all of these stories and baskets will remain in our future rotation.

We sent four volunteer teachers and myself to Dr. Nita Penfold's trainings this year, and renovated the Baldwin Room with preschool-friendly furnishings, carpet and décor.

Spirit Play has helped our teachers feel more comfortable, our families feel more invested – and invested in; and our congregation take more ownership in what our children are learning. Our youngest children have been more peaceful and more engaged in the Spirit Play room. After a successful pilot with significant volunteer and budget investment, we have decided to continue our work with Spirit Play in 2016-17 and future.

### **Interim tasks:**

Reexamining our monthly schedule: With teachers' desire for more consistency with the children, we eliminated Ingathering children's worship this spring. Instead, we are doing more robust multigenerational worship, with an emphasis on age-appropriate messages delivered through skits and rituals. This has also allowed us to bring more diverse voices into worship.

Developing new governance models: as we explore healthier administrative structures to fit our congregation's size, we are making a transition from RE Committee to Lifespan RE Council, which will serve as a Ministry Team on religious education for all ages at First Parish. Nursery, adult, and special needs portfolios have been added and the existing members' portfolios have been reconfigured to align with our age groups. We are working with the following goals:

- Support teachers and facilitators to ensure that children, youth and adult participants have a quality learning experience in RE, including providing strong curriculum and necessary materials and training
- Increase social fellowship and communication within and among age cohorts, exploring how we care for each other in community and how we can integrate RE into the life of the congregation

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Mandy Neff**

## **Standing Committee**

As the first year of a two year interim, 2015-2016 was a year of reflection and transition. First Parish has been on the cusp between a pastoral and program church for at least twenty years and, as a result, has struggled with lack of growth, burnout of leaders, and not enough entry level programs for newcomers. Finding ourselves suddenly in an interim period between ministers, we recognized that it was a perfect time to consider other ways we might organize our governance such that we might be more welcoming to newcomers, more supportive of lay leaders, staff, and minister, and better live into our mission.

### **Saying Goodbye to Rev. Fred Small**

In late June 2015, Rev. Fred Small announced his resignation effective September 30, 2016. Fred preached his final service as First Parish's Senior Minister on September 27, 2015 followed by a farewell party in the parlor.

### **Interim Minister**

With Rev. Fred Small's announcement of his resignation, the Standing Committee moved quickly to submit an interim minister application with the UUA Transition Office and appoint an Interim Minister Hiring Team. The team consisted of Suzi Grossman, Peggy Kraft, Chris McElroy and Rashid Shaikh. The Hiring Team reviewed several candidates presented by the UUA and made a recommendation to Standing Committee to hire Rev. Clyde Grubbs for one year. Standing Committee voted unanimously to do so.

After working with Clyde for several months and committing to his recommendation for governance change, Standing Committee voted in December 2015 to extend Clyde's contract through the second year of our interim period.

### **Search Committee**

During the first interim year, a key task is to establish a Ministerial Search Committee. Standing Committee solicited nominations from the congregation for this committee in early 2016. All nominees who were willing to serve if selected were required to participate in at least two of three Congregational Conversations hosted by Standing Committee in February and March 2016. These conversations were designed to elicit opinions from the congregation about the role we would want our next minister to play to help us live out our mission. Standing Committee made presentations about policy governance and the Interim Minister led a discussion on shared ministry. In April 2016, Standing Committee considered the leadership of each nominee and their participation in the congregational conversations and voted to create the Search Committee with the following members: Joanna Fink, Cushing Geisey, Marcia Hams, Karin Lin, Rashid Shaikh, and Alex Taylor.

## **Governance**

Upon the recommendation of Clyde Grubbs, Standing Committee conducted a study of policy governance as presented by Dan Hotchkiss in *Governance and Leadership*, 2d edition. Subsequently, the Interim Minister led discussions each month on key concepts including the distinction between pastoral and program-size churches, and Standing Committee's responsibilities as to mission, monitoring, and fiduciary oversight. Standing Committee also studied the division of work between the governing board and ministry teams and how to live into a shared ministry model of congregational life.

Standing Committee recognized that in order for governance change to be successful, we need to ensure other lay leaders would be educated in the concepts of policy governance and participate in the creation of the new model. The Standing Committee and Interim Minister led a governance leadership retreat in January 2016. In February 2016, Standing Committee voted to move to a policy governance model at First Parish.

Standing Committee then appointed a Governance Working Group to research and draft our policy book. Members include Marcia Hams, Peggy Kraft, Cade Murray, Eileen Sullivan, and Linda West, working with Clyde Grubbs and Carol Lewis.

Another critical piece of the Governance transition begun this year was the creation of the "Executive" team consisting of the Interim Minister, the Congregational Administrator and the Chair and Vice Chair of Standing Committee. This team met twice a month to ensure effective communication between the governing board and the ministry staff and together learn new ways to handle issues as they arise in the daily life of the church. Together, this group worked on transitioning Standing Committee's focus away from making operational and program decisions and toward a focus of mission, vision, and monitoring of the ministries of the church. We expect that it will take about five years to live fully into a new governance model so our activities the first year are just the beginning of the process.

## **Mission**

This year, Standing Committee welcomed members of the Transformation Team to our meeting in December 2015 to discuss and reflect on transformation at First Parish in Cambridge. As part of the interim work, as well as ministry work, it is important for us to identify how we lived into our mission to be a multicultural, anti-racist congregation during Fred Small's tenure with us and to reflect on what we need in our next minister as we move forward.

The Standing Committee also sought out congregation input on hanging a Black Lives Matter banner above the Mass. Ave entrance to the sanctuary. We solicited input via email from the congregation and in January 2016 discussed how we wanted to proceed. The feedback from the congregation was quite

positive with only a few expressing some concern. Our mission calls us to seek justice and after receiving this input and recommendations from the congregation, Standing Committee voted to approve the banner. It was installed in late winter 2016.

### **Vision of Ministry**

This year, the Interim Minister introduced an annual "Vision of Ministry" as a way for Standing Committee, the minister, and the staff to discern where to focus the ministry work in the coming year. Ideally the Vision of Ministry will be developed in the winter, followed by budget planning in the spring. This year was a practice year, with the Vision of Ministry planned in late spring. Next year, we intend to begin work in January to engage lay leaders in developing the plan before it is approved by Standing Committee. We believe developing an annual Vision of Ministry will be a very helpful tool in planning how we will live into our mission going forward.

### **Fiduciary Responsibilities**

Both the Meetinghouse and the Parish House are old structures that require ongoing maintenance in order to keep in good working condition. For years, First Parish has struggled with how to fund large capital improvement projects. As a result, large projects have often been delayed while we develop funding plans for each project. The list of deferred maintenance projects has been growing. Rather than trying to fund these needed projects singly, one after another, Cade Murray, Chair of Finance Committee, developed a plan for a line of credit against the endowment that would enable us to plan, implement, and pay for projects over the next ten years. Cade worked with the Investment, Building and Grounds, and Standing committees to create a rationale and proposal for the line of credit, which also explained how it would be used. The congregation voted to approve the line of credit at the June 2016 Semi-Annual Meeting. The first projects are replacing the boiler in the Parish House and replacing the floor in the kitchen. The line of credit will enable us to plan for projects proactively rather than responding to crises and save money overall by grouping similar projects together.

### **Stewardship Campaign**

For a second year, the Stewardship Committee used the "visiting steward" model to run a successful annual fund drive. After a training session with our consultant, Barry Finkelstein in March, about 30 volunteers from the congregation served as visiting stewards, each personally contacting four others during March and April to share perceptions of our congregation's mission and to ask for a pledge. This year, an anonymously given challenge grant encouraged the visiting stewards to excel. Each new pledge and each dollar of increase for current pledgers was matched dollar for dollar up to \$20,000. With this challenge to spur them on, the visiting stewards exceeded all of their goals.

## **Y2Y**

The early part of the year saw completion of the total rehab of the “auditorium” in our basement into a fully functioning homeless shelter. The Y2Y shelter run by the Phillips Brooks House Association was open just in time for Christmas on December 22, 2015.

## **Participation in General Assembly**

This year, the annual UUA General Assembly was held in Columbus, Ohio. The Standing Committee Chair joined the Church Administrator, the Director of Religious Education, and the Interim Minister, along with several lay leaders at the conference.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Peggy Kraft  
Chair of Standing Committee**

## **Transformation Team**

**Members:** Marcia Hams (Chair), Rashid Shaikh, Laura Heath, Interim Minister Rev. Clyde Grubbs and Ministerial Intern Seanan Fong. (During the year, Laura Health stepped down and we have not been able to recruit additional members).

Seven years ago, we formed the Transformation Team which has the role of helping the Standing Committee and the congregation fulfill our mission of transforming ourselves into a multiracial, multicultural, justice-making congregation. Last year we adopted a new charter for the Transformation Team, and this year we have clarified that the Team's role is to work with the ministers and First Parish leaders to create opportunities for the congregation to educate itself about racism and multiculturalism, as well as take action.

In service of this role, we led a discussion with the Standing Committee to evaluate First Parish's journey toward wholeness and transformation, using the *Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution and Transforming Institutional Values: Revisited* from Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing. These tools were suggested by Rev. Clyde Grubbs. This discussion gave us a stronger foundation for continuing to evaluate our progress as a parish.

The Transformation Team also encourages and works with other committees that have provided leadership to these efforts including the Social Justice Council, the Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras Task Force and the GBIO Task Force which coordinates our efforts with the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. GBIO is a racially diverse organization of 50 faith communities currently addressing housing, health care, prison issues, gun violence and education. We also work with UUMassAction (statewide network of UU congregations) on legislative campaigns on immigration and gun violence.

Below are the highlights of transformation related educational events and action opportunities organized or facilitated by the Transformation Team and other First Parish Task Forces this year. Clyde and Seanan also preached periodically on transformation related topics and facilitated several events. We sponsored Chelsea Collaborative and Centro Presente (partners in immigration work), UU Urban Ministries and UUMassAction as Shared Offering recipients this year.

### ***October***

- Organized a discussion of white privilege at the Ferry Beach All-Church Retreat. Led by one former and one current member of the TT.

### ***November***

- Six members participated in Vigil to support immigrant detainees at Suffolk County House of Correction with Boston New Sanctuary, UUMassAction and other faith groups.

### ***December***

- Plate collection donated to UUUrban Ministry for all weeks in December and Christmas Eve.

### ***January***

- *Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code* film and discussion. This film tells the story of Vatican documents issued in the fifteenth century that resulted in crusades of domination and dehumanization, as well as the law systems in the United States and

many other countries. These “doctrines” are the basis of concepts of white supremacy. Interim minister Clyde Grubbs, Marcia Hams and former Transformation Team member Charlene Garlneau led two sessions; one session on a Sunday after worship and the other on a Wednesday at Noon. 53 people participated overall.

- January 17: GBIO deep conversations to share personal experiences and social justice. This small group discussion had over 40 participants.
- January 19<sup>th</sup>: Standing Committee voted to put a large Black Lives Matter above our doors, as many UU congregations have done. The Social Justice Council had the banner made and it was mounted in April.
- January 21: Day of Humility and Unity, organized by GBIO. Nine of our members participated in a daylong fast, broken at a multi-faith dinner at the Islamic Center of Boston, to build community and show solidarity with the Muslim community and to combat the current increase in hateful speech and actions. This was the first in a series of four community meetings.
- January 24: Faith, Race and Justice: Solidarity with Black Lives Matter. Social Justice Council and Transformation Team organized a presentation and discussion with Black Lives Matter Cambridge organizer Alexis Toliver and White Accomplices organizer Abe Lateiner. About 45 people attended this meeting, including several from the Arlington Unitarian Church. Last year we honored two BLM leaders from Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School and participated in BLM demonstrations in Boston and Cambridge.

## **February**

- *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*. (Part I, 2/17 and 2/21). This film asks us to talk to talk about the causes and consequences of systemic inequity and features moving stories from racial justice leaders. Through discussion we deepened our understanding of the system of inequality, which can help move us to more reflection and action. 2 showings with facilitated discussion; about 50 people participated.

## **March**

- *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*. (Part 2) Two showings (one at lunch on a Wednesday and one after service) and facilitated discussions; over 25 members participated.

## **April**

- *Trails of Home and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration*. Film and discussion with the director, Rev. Dr. Miguel De LaTorre. Organized by Beyond Borders – Sin Fronteras and sponsored with other congregations and Boston New Sanctuary Movement. Panel with local immigrant families affected. Discussion.
- UUMassAction Lobby Day. 5 members attended. Immigration legislation, was one of issues along with mass incarceration, renewable energy and gun violence.
- Leading Edge Conference at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City. Theme: *Revolutionary Love: Tools, Tactics and Truth-Telling to Dismantle Racism*. Clyde Grubbs, Seanan Fong, Carol Lewis, Mandy Neff, Marcia

Hams and Rebecca Balder attended. (First Parish has participated for several years).

- Hosted First Parish leader and former Transformation Team member Karin Lin and Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones for a group interview on First Parish's transformation journey. Karin and Rev. Nancy are collaborating on a book about UU congregations on the road to multiculturalism, with profiles of five congregations, one of which is First Parish. (The others are San José, Phoenix, Annapolis, and Tulsa) (38 participants.) They also held private interviews with many congregants and staff.

## **May**

- Vigil to support immigrant detainees at Suffolk County House of Correction with Boston New Sanctuary, UUMassAction and other faith groups.
- GBIO annual accountability meeting with public officials. First Parish sent 27 of the total of 900 people attending from about 45 faith communities. Affordable housing and gun violence were the focus.
- Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras worship service with contributions from lay leaders and immigrant workers
- Social Justice Open House. Lunch, table discussions and presentations of proposals from three proposed task forces for the next year. (Beyond Borders, GBIO and EJTF). Table discussion used the GBIO model and were on personal experiences with housing, the environment and immigration.

## **June**

- Congregational approved GBIO Task Force, Environmental Justice Task Force and Beyond Borders - Sin Fronteras (immigration justice) for the next year.
- Congregational conversation on our journey toward wholeness and transformation, using the *Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution*. This was also served as the fourth congregational conversation that will be used by the Search Committee in developing our congregational packet for the ministerial search. The first three were planned by the Standing Committee. (over 30 people participated.)

In addition to these opportunities for engagement, the Transformation Team wrote several Meetinghouse News articles and reached out to the congregation for applications to be on the Transformation Team.

While we did not receive applications, former members of the Transformation Team have assisted in facilitation of several of our educational events and participation has been very robust throughout the year.

## **Abilities and Access Committee**

The Abilities and Access Committee serves to increase First Parish in Cambridge's accessibility and inclusion of people with (and without) disability. For the past 3 years we have been one of 10 congregations in the pilot program to gain certification from the Unitarian Universalist Association as an Accessible and Inclusive Ministry. It also serves as the Right Relations Committee concerning disability issues.

In the 2015-2016 church year we have focused on these tasks:

- Conducted RE training in September 2015 on how teachers might respond to students with disability.
- Invited guest minister Rev. Tess Baumberger to preach on historical Unitarian Dorothea Dix's fight for better treatment of those with mental illness. Worship took place April 3, 2016.
- Organized postcard-writing to Massachusetts state legislators as part of Boston Independent Living Center's larger campaign in support of increased funding for affordable housing for people with disability. Held tabling efforts at First Parish (April 3 and April 24) and at UU Medford (May 15 and May 22).
- Posted a fairly comprehensive Tips and Techniques document for working with people with various disabilities.

During the 2016-2017 church year, the committee seeks to:

- Hold at least one more workshop (for both adults and children in the RE program) to increase awareness and understanding of different issues related to disability within the community. This is an AIM certification requirement.
- Arrange/organize another disability-related worship. This is an AIM certification annual requirement.
- Continue to work with the UUA to gain AIM certification:
  - Re-assess accessibility and inclusion
  - Certify an accessibility link on First Parish's website - make information about the church's accessibility features more readily available.
  - Final status reporting of plan progress to the UUA
  - Submission of re-certification plan to the UUA
  - Hold congregational vote to request AIM certification
  - Request AIM certification from the UUA

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Susanna Schroeder**

## **Community Auction Committee**

The Auction Team organized another successful community auction at First Parish. We have settled into a successful pattern of collecting donations in October and bidding during two Sundays in November during social hour. It has been a struggle to collect payments and get lists to hosts by mid January so moving forward, events will begin in February. Previously we encouraged hosts to schedule dinners and events before August but plan to be more relaxed this coming year as long event occurs in 2017.

The success of the auction is measured both in community building and fundraising. The auction raised \$15,160. The majority of the money (\$10,025) came from dinners and events hosted by members. Services raised \$1,835 while vacation homes raised \$1,800. In the previous two years, vacation homes had raised more money \$2,100-\$3,000 so the Auction Team would love to identify other vacation home options for future auctions. Feedback about meals was positive and we had 3 new hosts for meals plus 2 new flat rate events along with 14 returning hosts. There has been increase in number of friends co-hosting meals (9 of 20 were co-hosted by friends). Co-hosting and planning events together is another way to build community and strengthen relationships.

This was the second year of offering a flat rate event at the church in which people signed up first come, first serve rather than bidding. The flat rate events allow people with a variety of incomes to participate and are family friendly. An effort was made to hold several events during the day after getting feedback that some members found evening events challenging. A Saturday brunch was well received as was a pizza and games night. In order to host the pizza and games night, it was necessary to purchase pizza so while \$370 was raised, the profit was only \$250. This event was the most multi-generational event in recent auction years as members of all ages enjoyed playing board games together. In the past two years, we recruited volunteers for flat rate events after the auction bidding. This year we will recruit the volunteers in October to make sure we have adequate support before the auction bidding.

An experiment this year was to host a "gifts to go table" which raised \$265. Unclear if the amount raised was worth the effort including cash management. Baskets continue to be popular especially low cost children's arts baskets and science/craft baskets for children. We implemented a value of at least \$40 or gifts to make gifts easier to manage. A special feature of the auction was 7 quilts made by First Parish members.

Thanks to the auction team. Jan Ellertsen refuses to be co-chair but she plays a critical role in planning, quality improvement and organizing services, gifts and baskets. Maria Altamore took over the task of creating the beautiful auction posters and assisted with communications. Robin Brown and Nan Waldstein helped with donations and staffing tables. Jennifer Griffith, Cushing Gieseck and Loring Brinkerhoff helped with staffing tables, making baskets and other critical tasks. Set

up and take down of the auction and tallying the results was a group effort. Special thanks to Ellen Liner for helping to organize the gifts to go table and donating so many beautiful earrings to be sold. And the auction wouldn't be possible without the over 70 friends and members who donate time, talent and treasure to have items for us to bid on!

**In gratitude,  
Eileen Sullivan, Auction Team Chair**

### **Hospitality Committee**

Committee members: Gwen Cranmore, Claire Hastie, Steve Hanna

The Hospitality Committee continued to organize the Sunday Social Hour this year. We also organized a potluck lunch for Homecoming Sunday on September 13, a going away lunch for Rev. Fred Small on September 27, and a catered lunch for Dia de los Muertos on November 1. And we organized the Christmas Cookie Swap on December 20.

As the year wore on, the size of our committee and the amount of time available shrunk. We haven't had much luck recruiting new members. Therefore, we'll be moving to a new model for Hospitality in September. The church is going to hire a Hospitality Coordinator who will cook lunch on Sunday morning and sell it at a low cost to people who need to stay for meetings or just want to socialize. Always new things at First Parish!

Thanks to all who have helped with or enjoyed the Hospitality events this year. Let's make next year's events even better.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Hanna**

## **Investment Committee**

The Investment Committee is charged with prudently administering the endowments of First Parish and Paine Senior Services, along with the reserve accounts of Cambridge Forum and Tuesday Meals. These endowment funds represent the cumulative bequests and gifts made by members over a period of many years. Over time, and through our investments, the endowments have grown in value.

During the past year the committee met three times November 2, 2015, February 1, 2016 and May 2, 2016. Tim Warren served as Chair and presided at each of these meetings.

One of the functions of the Investment Committee is to determine the disbursement amounts into the operating budgets of First Parish, Paine Senior Services and Cambridge Forum. The overall goal is to ensure that the amounts withdrawn from the endowments do not exceed the inflation-adjusted returns of the portfolios over time so that the endowments are not whittled away. In this way First Parish and its affiliated organizations benefit from long-term, predictable income streams. The committee has adopted a written policy that states that we consider withdrawal rates of between 4.5% and 5% of the trailing average portfolio market values during the previous 13 quarters to be prudent and sustainable, 5%-5.5% to be questionable and over 5.5% to be unsustainable.

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the endowment contributed \$322,000 to the operating budget of First Parish (including amounts designated for restricted purposes such as the Hall and Taft funds), compared with \$294,000 paid out in the previous year. This is a withdrawal rate of 4.5%.

During the 2016 calendar year, the endowment is contributing \$175,000 to the operating budget of Paine Senior Services, compared with a contribution of \$170,000 for the previous year. This is a withdrawal rate of 4.6% and it represents 90% of the Paine operating budget.

For our May meeting, Cambridge Forum Director, Mary Stack, requested a withdrawal of \$10,000 from the Cambridge Forum endowment. This request represented a withdrawal rate of 6.7%. The Committee decided that this amount was outside the spending guidelines we had established and voted to approve a withdrawal of \$7,000, the same amount as the previous year. This withdrawal rate is 4.7%. The withdrawal was authorized for payment in June 2016. The Committee informed Mary Stack that we would consider a request for another \$3,000 withdrawal at our November meeting but it must be submitted with a plan for sustainability of the Forum operations.

At our November and February meetings we discussed a proposal from the Cade Murray, Chair of the Finance Committee, about obtaining a line of credit from the endowment to facilitate more efficient long-term repairs and upgrades to the physical plant. The Committee was supportive of the idea and in consultation with Lucia Santini at Walden Asset Management we made several suggestions for the best way to structure the line of credit. At our February meeting we voted unanimously to recommend the proposal to the Standing Committee who in turn would bring it to a vote of the Parish, per our by-laws. The proposal called for the outstanding balance of the line of credit to be posted in our assets at Walden. Interest on the loan would be charged at the same rate as our payout percentage to First Parish (currently 4.5%). The interest will be shown as income to the endowment. The interest will be deducted from the quarterly payout amounts that Walden makes to First Parish. The term of the loan will be 10 years.

During this fiscal year we continued to receive payments of interest and principal from First Parish to amortize the loan made from the endowment for elevator construction. The opening balance of the loan on September 30, 2006 was \$430,477. The interest rate is 5.6% and the term is 25 years. The Treasurer of First Parish made payments to the endowment quarterly. The total paid to the endowment was \$32,099.64 and the outstanding principal balance owed to the endowment on June 30, 2016 was \$309,312.63.

During this fiscal year we continued to receive regular quarterly payments of interest and principal from First Parish to amortize the loan made from the endowment for a new heating system on March 10, 2008. The original balance of the loan was \$245,000. The interest rate is 6.0% and the term is 20 years. The Treasurer of First Parish made payments to the endowment quarterly. The total paid to the endowment was \$21,117.36 and the outstanding principal balance owed to the endowment on June 30, 2016 was \$179,722.19.

In August of 2008 we withdrew \$67,500 from the endowment to assist Fred Small and his wife Julia Wormser with their purchase of a home at 4 Theriault Court in Cambridge. This withdrawal was authorized by a vote of the Parish at a meeting in April 2008. First Parish made a shared appreciation loan secured by a mortgage on the property. Shortly after Fred left the ministry at First Parish in September 2015, the loan was paid off and the mortgage was discharged. The mortgage did not produce income, but when it was repaid First Parish received 17.42% of the appreciation in value of the home. First Parish received the principal of \$67,500, plus its share of the appreciation in value. The First Parish share of the appreciation totaled \$17,473, a gain of 25.9% over a 7-year period.

Since August 31, 2003 Walden Asset Management (a division of Boston Trust and Investment Management Company) has managed our investments. We have been pleased with the management and customer service at Walden. We are equally pleased with the low management fees that we have negotiated with Walden using an RFP to solicit proposals to manage our endowment. We are also very pleased with Walden's ability to assist us in making our investments socially responsible,

which is one of their specialties. In addition to acting on our guidelines in the selection of socially responsible corporations for our investments, Walden also assists and encourages us to file and co-file shareholder resolutions with respect to those investments. Walden also uses our proxy to vote our shares on other social issues that come before shareholders. Jennifer Griffith is the liaison designated by our Investment Committee to work with and advise Walden's Tim Smith on shareholder advocacy issues.

At our February meeting, Timothy Smith of Walden Asset Management reviewed our record of social action. During the previous year, we participated in shareholder advocacy on several issues with corporations where First Parish owns common stock. For example, we were co-filers of resolutions on Lobbying Disclosure (ConocoPhillips, UPS, Google and IBM), Climate Change (Emerson and Hubbell) and Sustainability Reporting (C.R. Bard, Emerson Electric). Our shares were voted in favor of resolutions recommended by Walden in another 15 cases.

The First Parish endowment increased from \$7,997,679 on June 30, 2015 to \$8,167,287 on June 30, 2016. Co-mingled with the First Parish investments are endowment funds for the Cambridge Forum and Tuesday Meals. The Paine endowment increased from \$4,019,773 to \$4,076,091 over the same period. The Cambridge Forum endowment increased from \$155,163 to \$157,912 over the same period. The Tuesday Meals endowment increased from \$82,771 to \$131,498 over the same period. The substantial increase in the Tuesday Meals endowment is due in part to generous gifts from an anonymous donor. These changes in investment value are net of management fees and of the contributions that the endowment made to the operating expenses of First Parish, the Cambridge Forum and Paine Senior Services. Respectively, those contributions were \$322,000, \$7000 and \$175,000.

Walden Asset Management sends us quarterly reports of our investment performance. For the 12 months ending June 30, 2016 the First Parish endowment showed total return of 6.7%. This compares favorably with the return of our benchmark portfolio which had a total return of 2.4%. For Walden's entire tenure as our investment managers (i.e., August 31, 2003 to June 30, 2016), they have achieved an annualized total return of 7.6%, compared with a gain of 6.2% for our benchmark portfolio.

In June 2013 at a Special Meeting the members of First Parish in Cambridge, the congregation voted to divest itself of all investments in companies related to fossil fuels within five years. At the time of the vote the value of those investments was approximately \$413,000. As of June 30, 2016 that portfolio had been reduced to \$3,270. The sole remaining energy investment is with ConocoPhillips and is being retained for shareholder voting privileges.

The Investment Committee typically meets on the first Monday of November, February, and May at 7:00PM at First Parish. New members with some financial and/or investing knowledge or an interest to learn are welcome. For those revising their wills, please consider that a contribution to the First Parish endowment provides a perpetual annual gift to future members of the community.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Tim Warren, Chair**

**Jennifer Griffith**

**Thomas Hartl**

**John Kwoka**

**Charles Leiserson**

**Ernie Sabine**

**Don Tucker**

**Mary Wright**

## **Music Committee**

Committee members: Jonathan Barnhart, First Parish Music Director; Steve Hanna and Mara Vorhees, co-chairs; Ashley Brueske, Jean Farrington, Irene Merwin, Mark Pickering.

The role of the Music Committee is to promote music as a form of ministry at First Parish, not only during worship service, but also in less formal situations and in the wider community. In 2015-2016, we have had a productive and eventful year, carrying out this ministry in a variety of ways:

### ***Music during Worship***

We recognize that music is an important part of the worship service, and we strive to include music that enhances the service, cultivating healing, connection and spiritual growth.

### ***Choir***

The choir continues to thrive, with 20-25 members singing on most Sundays.

Although there is no rehearsal or performing during the summer services, some of our regular singers participate in a "hymn choir" which sits at the front of the church and assists in leading hymns.

Choir members have enjoyed socializing together even when there is no music involved, including a monthly lunch after service and a fabulous end-of-year potluck party.

Several talented members of the choir have been afforded solo opportunities, and we hope to continue this policy, as repertoire and rehearsal time allows.

When permitted by the character of the arrangements, and with adequate rehearsal time, we have experimented with the Choir singing from memory, to improve communication with the congregation.

The choir has continued to support different types of congregational singing, such as singing with the children during RE Sunday.

### ***Section Leaders***

Full funding of our requested budget has allowed us to keep four sections leaders: Renée Saïndon (soprano section leader), Matthew Truss (alto section leader), Jesse Darden (tenor section leader), and James Lesui (bass section leader). This full quartet enhances Sunday services by strengthening the choir. We anticipate that all four will be returning for the next church year.

In addition to supporting the choir, the section leaders performed exceptional solos throughout the year, each highlighting their individual strengths in a wide variety of music styles.

In May 2016, the section leaders cooperated to put on Finding Home: A Benefit Recital for the Y2Y Homeless Shelter of Harvard Square (which is housed in the

basement of First Parish). These talented individuals volunteered their time and put on a great show, in the process raising several hundred dollars for a good cause.

We are grateful that the FY17 budget includes funding for the section leaders to participate fully in Gospel Sundays, should they be available.

### ***Choir Music***

In addition to some very special guest musicians, the choir plays a key role in supporting more diverse congregational singing, often singing in Spanish and other languages, as well as experimenting with folk songs from other countries, African-American spirituals, pop music, etc.

#### ***Some highlights from 2015/2016:***

- Day of the Dead: songs in Spanish and a return appearance by I Mariachi Veritas de Harvard, a traditional (including costumes) band of trumpet, violins and singers.
- Christmas Eve: The enthusiasm of choir members has allowed First Parish, for quite a few years in a row, to have the Choir participate in the service, along with soloists and instrumentalists.
- Easter: The choir presented several choruses from Haydn's "Creation," with accompaniment of a small string ensemble.
- Gospel Sunday: For the fifth year, the Music Committee invited Linda Brown-San Martin to lead an expanded choir in a spirited service of gospel music, this year on two separate occasions (October and June). These services require extra rehearsals, as all music is learned by ear, but there has been consistently good participation by choir members and some non-choir members.

For the June gospel Sunday, we inaugurated the First Parish/Cambridge Area Gospel Choir (FPCAGC) with strong efforts at recruitment outside the FP congregation. Announcements were sent to area churches and submitted to local news outlets, but the most successful recruitment efforts were announcements posted on area choir list serves. Rather than several rehearsals in the week leading up to Gospel Sunday, rehearsals were held weekly for a month. More than 30 people sang in the spring FPCAGC, with over half coming from outside church membership.

Results of a survey following the June gospel Sunday were extremely positive, indicating most participants both liked the new model, and wished to participate in the future.

### ***Music Outside of Worship***

We recognize that music is a valuable tool in building community. In the past, the Music Committee has organized various events to allow singers and other musicians to come together and make music together, just for fun and to reach out to the wider community.

- Christmas Caroling: First Parish continued its strong relationship with Sancta Maria and the Neville Manor for this annual mid-December event. As usual, there was lots of great food and plenty of holiday cheer at the potluck.
- Sancta Maria Sing-alongs: Elke Jahns and other First Parish members and friends continue to lead monthly sing-alongs on Saturday mornings at Sancta Maria nursing home. There are usually half a dozen singers that sing familiar songs along with the residents. Residents look forward to the visits and sing very enthusiastically!

### **Stewardship Committee**

**Committee members:** Karin Lin, Susan Shepherd, Don Tucker (chair), and Linda West.

Most of the committee's efforts went into the annual fund drive. We considered the Spring 2015 annual drive a success and organized a similar annual drive that kicked off on March 13, 2016.

As in 2015 we worked with consultant Barry Finkelstein and used the Visiting Steward model—we tried to arrange as many one to one visits as possible, with attention to reach out to those we couldn't meet with in 2015. We again made use of a suggested fair share giving guide, modelled on that provided by the UUA.

The participation of the 28 Visiting Stewards (vs 32 last year), including 10 new stewards, was crucial to the annual fund drive. We believe the ½ day training session that Barry led was also an important part of the fund drive. Many, but not all, of the pledges came in during the 3 weeks after the training session and kickoff (March 12 and 13).

The annual fund total as of August 12, 2016 was \$310,025 which included a \$20,000 matching challenge grant. There are 130 pledging units plus 3 that we don't consider pledges because they come from charitable gift trusts. The totals compare to last year's totals (\$314,076 and 171 pledge units as of July 20, 2015).

We believe the annual fund drive was a success in this interim ministry year, not just in raising funds for First Parish but also by building connections and community through the one to one visits and training.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Don Tucker, Chair**

## The Middle East Education Group

### Mission and Description

The group strives to promote deeper knowledge and understanding of current issues in the Middle East, especially where the United States government or the United Nations plays a role. This involves offering educational opportunities such as films, field trips, book discussions, lectures, and panel discussions. Our primary audience is First Parish; some programs are also open to the wider community. For more information e-mail MEEG@firstparishcambridge.org

**Membership:** Robin Brown, Sharon DeVos, Pamela Fox, Pepper Greene, Grace Hall, Claire Hastie, Ernie Kirwan, Donner Lohnes, Dorianne Low, Don McInnes, Jeannette McInnes, Susan Nye, Rashid Shaikh

**Co-Chairs:** Susan Nye and Grace Hall

Summary of events and activities during the 2015-2016 church year

The Group presented the following events:

- October 4 - Visit to the Armenian Museum in Watertown.
- February 14 - Robin Brown spoke on "Who Owns the Past? The Politics of Archaeology in the Middle East".
- April 3 - An Iranian couple (friends of Don McInnes) spoke on the "The Persian Perspective"
- June 2 - A Palestinian House of Friendship fundraiser was held at First Parish, co-sponsored with First Church UCC Cambridge.

Additional activities of the Group:

- A Cambridge Forum talk for November 13 that we planned to co-sponsor in the fall did not occur since the Palestinian speaker, Abdel Bari Atwan, could not obtain a visa.
- November: Auction basket from MEEG was assembled
- December 13- MEEG sponsored Social Hour.

The following items are under consideration for 2016/2017:

- Expect to participate in the auction (basket or other items)
- Plan to host a social hour and possibly donate altar flowers.
- May offer some type of event/class at the Parish Retreat in October
- Visit a mosque and/or synagogue
- May co-sponsor a Cambridge Forum talk, if a suitable match is found.
- Possibly suggest a book for parish-wide reading.
- Hope to invite parish members to join us at a Middle East-themed restaurant, perhaps after service one Sunday.
- May show a film related to issues in the Middle East.
- Hope to address the topic of Islamophobia in a talk or Q & A.
- May present a program or action related to refugees in or from the Middle East

## **Circle Dance Meditation Report**

Circle Dance Meditation went very well this year. We met on the 1st and 3rd Thursday evenings from 7:45-9:15, right after the yoga class finished. Our group was attended by anywhere between 6 to 20 people who enjoyed the meditative movements set to meaningful music from cultures all over the world. We also had a few weekend dances.

Partially as a result of having better attendance on the weekend and partially as a result of some changes in my own personal schedule, we are moving the schedule to once a month on the 2nd Sunday from 6:30-8:30. I think this will accommodate people who are too tired to come out on a Thursday evening, and also, having the earlier time (not finishing at 9:15) might help people in the wintertime, when the light fades so quickly.

As a Unitarian Music Director (in another town), I have been noticing that this contemplative circle dance practice, also known as sacred circle dance, is now happening at many Unitarian churches around the country and even the world, because it is so much in resonance with the Unitarian principles. Here is a short list of churches where it has been and/or is featured:

- First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, Canada
- First Church of Vancouver in Vancouver, Canada
- First Church Unitarian in Littleton, MA
- Arlington Unitarian Church in Arlington, VA
- Starr King Unitarian Universalist in Plymouth, NH
- Unitarian Universalist Westside Congregation in Rio Rancho, NM
- Westwood Unitarian Congregation in Alberta, Canada
- Northshore Unitarian Universalist in Danvers, MA

As a member of First Parish Cambridge, I am so honored to be able to offer this to the people in the church and surrounding community and the beautiful, sacred upstairs space. The wood of the room and the windows support people to come deeply into their hearts as we move, and we always end by sending all of the prayer energy that we have gathered into the surrounding community and the whole world.

This upcoming year, as an experiment, I would like to call it Global Circle Dance Meditation. The main reason for this change is that I feel the word "global" is being used more often, as our humanity moves toward a global consciousness that is more about interdependence and the inherent worth and dignity of all beings. I hope to report back next year that there was an increase in attendance and that new people will keep being beckoned to the once a month practice through the change of schedule and name.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Kaeza Fern**

## **UU Buddhist Meditation Group**

We meet every Tuesday at 7:00 PM throughout the year, except when I am unable to lead. When I cannot be present, we are invited to attend the meditations and teachings of Natural Dharma Fellowship, also Tuesdays at 7:00 PM at the Friends Meeting House, Longfellow Park.

I am a "Core Teacher" of Natural Dharma Fellowship ([www.naturaldharma.org](http://www.naturaldharma.org)).

In addition to the sponsorship of First Parish and Natural Dharma, we practice also under the aegis of the Foundation For Active Compassion ([www.foundationforactivecompassion](http://www.foundationforactivecompassion)), which authorizes my teaching, and on whose board I serve.

The group is connected to the UU Buddhist Fellowship, a network of an amazing number of Buddhist practice groups in UU congregations. Here is the web site of the Fellowship, including an announcement of the 2017 Convocation:

<http://uubf.org/wp/>

The First Parish group has had fluctuating attendance (we do not keep a "membership" list). Attendance varies between 3 and 13. The core of the group includes a number of First Parish members, including Lyn Lydsky, Lee Varon, Mary Ann Szporluk, George Bell, Ellen Liner, and Grey Lee and a number of others. New folks, both First Parish members and others, continually express an interest and attend once or twice.

The group has become very important to those who attend regularly. We practice Tibetan-sourced, but universally accessible, "bodhicitta" meditations, the cultivation of an open heart, breaking through self-preoccupation and personal habits, learning to trust deep, natural qualities of love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. It has made a difference in how many of us live and relate to others and the world.

An essential part of the Buddhist tradition is the practice of generosity (dana), by which the free giving of the dharma (teaching), which is evaluated as priceless, is met by the free offering of the student/practitioner who benefits from the teaching. We are accepting voluntary donations from those in the group and from them give a modest amount per meeting (\$25) to First Parish, and the rest to the teacher.

I can't imagine a more fitting group for UU's, fulfilling the promise of the statement on beliefs and principles on uua.org: "we gather to nurture our spirits and put our faith into action."

Respectfully submitted

Joel Baehr

## **Women's Sacred Circle**

Women's Sacred Circle meets monthly each year beginning in September and ending in June of the following year. We meet every first Saturday in the month in the Barn Room from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Circle leaders arrive to set up just before or after 6:30 pm. Each year our September circle is for returning members only and our October circle is open for new members to sample a circle and decide on joining the Circle for the year. All circles for the rest of that year are closed. In general, our Circle membership stands at around 25.

Each year for the past 5 years we have offered a Tarot Night for the Annual Auction. It seems to be very popular and we certainly delighted in hosting and sharing on April 8<sup>th</sup> our love of Tarot. Six of our members were set up to read for the winning participants this year and I dare say, the readers had as good a time as the participants. The evening raised \$320 for the church. We look forward to doing it again this year.

At each of our monthly circles we participate in a collection of donations to the church for the space First Parish provides us and our monthly collection ranges from \$5 - \$20 each month. This past year we collected \$154 in donations. This brings our total donations, including Tarot Night, to \$474.

Our members who choose to do so also participate in the optional, annual Beach Ritual in one of the summer months on one of the local beaches after the daylight hours and on or near a Full Moon. This is very beneficial in connecting to the Earth and Nature centered work we focus on in our practice and prayer. This year it was held in July at Winter Island, Salem Willows in Salem, MA. It was truly a magical evening and the Moon shone brightly for our ritual mandala in the sand.

Our Leadership Council this past year consisted of 4-5 members. We met 4 times over the year for the discussion of issues that arose in the running of Circle, for the planning of the calendar year's theme and activities and to address any concerns brought up by our members or the church. These meetings were held at one of the Leadership Council member's houses, which provides communion as well as support for our Council and the Circle. At the September Returning Members' Circle the subject of shared leadership was introduced. The membership came to agreement that we would like to explore this possible new model for organization and a first planning committee meeting was held at the church in May 2016 to decide just what form of shared leadership that model would take. A fully Shared Leadership model was agreed upon and adopted with a planning committee meeting following in June and August. The newly formed Shared Leadership Wisdom Council met for the first time August 6th to discuss the change in leadership and to begin the process of choosing roles and revising the operation, guidelines and newly added covenant of our Women's Sacred Circle for the coming year.

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the church members and administration for the space provided to us for our spiritual practice and for the support and interest, compassion and understand extended to us, The Women's Sacred Circle.

**Blessed Be,  
Lori Green, member of Shared Leadership Wisdom Council,**

## CAMBRIDGE FORUM

### 2015-2016 Public Programs

Board of Directors: Ann Daily\*, President; David Leveille, Vice-President for Programs; Jane Sturtevant\*, Treasurer; Janet Burns\*, Clerk; Jennifer Griffith\*, John Kwoka\* Rashid Shaikh\*, Timothy Weiskel, Gail Leftwich Kitch.

\* Members of First Parish in Cambridge

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2015-2016 marked Cambridge Forum's 49th year of public programming at First Parish in Cambridge. We originally budgeted for 7 programs, planned for 10 but through the use of skilled editing, we were able to produce 17 radio programs. These were broadcast on the NPR network as part of Cambridge Forum's weekly transmission which consists of 52 separate 30-minute programs. In addition, all of our live events were recorded by WGBH Forum Network and upload to their website and our own. This allows many more viewers, locally and globally, to view a lengthier video version of Cambridge Forum events completely free. Attendance in our live programs varied but the most popular was Amy Goodman's evening which attracted a full house of over 400 people, and the "Rise Again" musical fundraiser, which drew about 350 people.

For the twelfth year, Cambridge Forum focused its programming under an umbrella theme and during 2015-2016 this was "Deep Globalization". The fall schedule included a spirited Climate Justice debate and we scheduled an "Inside ISIS" event which had to be cancelled due to problems with the speaker's visa. But, the subject matter proved prophetically fitting as it sadly coincided with the week of the Parish bombings. We closed out the year with writer and poet, Richard Blanco, discussing his Cuban roots growing up in the Little Havana section of Miami. The focus of "Deep Globalization" allowed us to examine some of the ways in which globalization affects everyday life, regardless of one's location on the planet. Topics ran the gamut from how encryption in cell phones impacts personal privacy and national security, to the myriad effects of global pesticide use on human health, animal populations and the environment. But in addition to drawing public attention to or even sounding alarm bells about certain subjects, Cambridge Forum also attempts to address problems by posing solutions or suggesting alternatives. Speakers often outline ways in which citizens can work together to meet these challenges and help create a society that lives up to its democratic ideals. Wen Stephenson did this with his treatment of environmental justice, James Miner and Jesse Banhazi discussed the ways in which urban farming provides a viable option for the future of growing food, and Dr. Noah Wilson-Rich and David Hackenberg suggested ways of saving the honey bee (and us all!) from extinction. Amy Goodman, from Democracy Now, also demonstrated why it is important not to compromise one's idealism in the fight for truth, justice and equality in U.S. society and worldwide.

Kendra Gray, a member of First Parish and an active Cambridge Forum Board member, was away for several weeks due to a job placement at McGill University, which has blossomed into a full-time job. Sadly, Canada's gain is our loss and Kendra has had to resign from the Board. The search for new Board members continues but a new director has been found. Mary Stack took over as Director of the Forum in July 2015 to fill the position left vacant by Pat Suhrcke's retirement.

Cambridge Forum's operating budget for 2015-2016 was stable but reduced both in terms of revenue and expenses over the prior year. The cost of editing programs increased as did National Public Radio's cost for transmission. There was insufficient time to apply for new grant funding in the existing financial year, so Cambridge Forum worked with existing revenue and made special efforts to produce double programs from a single event, thus maximizing output while minimizing recording costs. During a short period of overlap, the former and new director were both on the payroll concurrently. To cover these costs the Forum made a request for a payout from the Endowment similar to last year. All of the Cambridge Forum programs, which are free and open to the public, were held at First Parish.

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A complete list of 2015-2016 Cambridge Forum programs is below:

**Dispatches from the Front Lines of Climate Justice** **October 7**  
Wen Stephenson a former journalist at *The Atlantic* and *The Boston Globe* and a contributor to *The Nation*, embarks on a personal journey to explore the current state of the climate justice movement in the United States.

*Co-sponsored by the 350Mass.org/Better Future Project and Divest Harvard.*

**RISE AGAIN TOUR** **October 17**  
A musical evening with Annie Patterson, Peter Blood, The Nields, Charlie King, Fred Small and Kallet, Epstein and Cicone. A sing-along concert and fundraiser for Cambridge Forum, in the Pete Seeger tradition with the *Rise Again* songbook.

**Inside ISIS** **November 18**  
Abdel Bari Atwan, distinguished Palestinian author and journalist, explains the Rise of ISIS, the concept of the Digital Caliphate and the role of extreme violence in its strategy.

**The Cuban Connection** **December 16**  
Poet and writer Richard Blanco reads from his memoir *The Prince of Los Cocuyos* which describes growing up in Miami as the son of Cuban exiles. He explores the search for Latin identity and sense of place.

**Privacy versus Security - Infiltrating the Terrorist Network** **January 27**  
Can we track down terrorists while also safeguarding our personal data? Greg Nojeem, Director of the Freedom, Security and Technology project at the Center for Democracy and Technology in Washington, DC and Daniel Rosenthal, former Director for Counterterrorism on the National Security Council in the Obama administration.

**Reclaiming Conversation – The Power of Talk in the Digital Age** **February 3**  
MIT professor and media scholar, Sherry Turkle has spent 30 years looking at people's relationship with technology and each other. Long an enthusiast for digital technology's possibilities, Turkle more recently began noting some disturbing findings and started documenting the isolating effects of technology. Are we spending our lives connected to devices but disconnected from each other?

**Rotten Reportage – Do We Have the Media We Deserve?** **March 9**  
As we prepare to elect the new President, we ask what is wrong with journalism in America today? Speakers are Lonnie Isabel from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism; Peter S. Goodman who is global Editor in Chief for *International Business Times* and Sam Fleming the Director of News and Programming for WBUR.

**The Future of Food****March 30**

The urban option for feeding the growing population with James Miner, urban designer and eco-architect from Sasaki Associates plus Jessie Banhazl the founder and CEO of Green City Growers.

**All About Bees****April 27**

What is killing our bees and what can we do to save them? Dr. Noah Wilson-Rich founder of The Best Bees company and author of *The Bee – A Natural History* along with Dave Hackenberg, apiarist for the past 50 years and owner of Buffy Bees in Lewisburg, PA.

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30**Changing America – 20 Years of Democracy Now****May 10**

Journalists extraordinaire, Amy and David Goodman have both achieved international recognition for their work. Amy is the host and producer of well-known TV, radio and internet news program *Democracy Now!* Which has been running for 20 years. She specializes in bringing the voices and opinions of the unheard to the airwaves – giving voice to those people and issues outside the mainstream news department. Amy believes that small movements can make big changes!

## **PAINE SENIOR SERVICES 2015 Report**

### **History:**

Paine Senior Services was established in 1905, when Jeannie Warren Paine left a bequest to First Parish to assist Cambridge residents. At first, the Paine Fund (as it was originally called) responded mainly to financial distress. Gradually, Paine expanded its operations to include a wider variety of social services. In 1977 the name was changed to Paine Social Services (PSS) to more accurately reflect the agency's work. The name was changed again in 2008 to "Paine Senior Services" to more accurately identify the clients we serve.

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### **Mission:**

PSS is committed to providing a wide range of high quality, personalized services to Cambridge elders and their families, regardless of their ability to pay a fee. In a spirit of compassion and justice, PSS offers assistance through counseling, preventive planning, advocacy, and collaboration with community resources.

### **Board of Directors:**

The Board is comprised of First Parish members or affiliates and professionals in the elder provider network. Board members are chosen for the skills that they can offer the agency.

- Helene Quinn, Executive Director, the Cambridge Homes, Co-Chair
- Laura Estan, First Parish, Co-Chair
- Ernie Sabine, First Parish, Treasurer
- Heather Benjamin, LICSW, Compassionate Care Hospice
- Annie Fowler, Director of Client Services, Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services
- Liz Seelman, Cambridge Council on Aging
- Andrew Sabine

### **Staff:**

Elizabeth Aguijo, LICSW, Executive Director, Social Worker

Maureen Harty, LICSW, Social Worker, SHINE counselor

Pat Leiby, Bookkeeper

### **CLIENT PROFILE: below are the top 3 reasons that elders were referred to PSS**

- **SHINE:** Serving Health Information Needs of Elders is a state program that trains providers and volunteers to help elders research their options regarding their health insurance needs. SHINE counselors attend monthly meetings to keep themselves updated on constantly changing insurance benefits. Referrals for SHINE tripled from 2007 to 2008, demonstrating the ever-increasing need for help to identify appropriate, yet affordable, insurance.
- **Finances:** Includes developing a monthly budget with clients and helping them adhere to the budget. May include accessing benefits such as food stamps, fuel assistance, etc. to maximize income. May also include advocating, regarding utilities, credit cards, and other debts.
- **Housing:** Referrals for help to either maintain current housing or explore other options, including subsidized senior housing or assisted living. This is reflective of the economic and housing distress in which the country finds itself. We have been getting referrals for elders who face foreclosure or have been left homeless and living in very stressful situations.

\* Many elders are referred for multiple reasons. For example, if someone is struggling with housing issues, finances are often also a concern.

- **Total # referrals for service in 2015: 92**
- **Average # active clients each month: 25**
- **The average PSS client:**

- Is in their 70's
- Lives alone with no available family to help
- Is Mass Health-eligible (not more than \$2,000 in assets, \$822-\$922 monthly income)
- Lives in subsidized housing
- Has medical and/or cognitive issues that require ongoing case management
- Has mental health issues that require ongoing case management
- Is unable to pay any fee at all

- **Of note, the numbers above do not include those seniors we serve in our presentations or groups—approximately an additional 40-50. These groups are:**

- Stronger Together—an ongoing seniors' group in recovery from substance use disorders
- SHINE presentations--to update seniors on yearly changes to health insurance coverage
- Clutter presentations—for those who need resources, information, and support to deal with clutter
- Mental Health First Aid—an 8 hour training to help the community more adequately help those dealing with mental health disorders

## **REASONS CASES ARE CLOSED**

At the end of each year, PSS reviews reasons why cases are closed. Reasons include: Problem Resolved, Referred Elsewhere, Client Declined Services, Client Placed in Nursing Home, Client Death, Consult Only, Spouse/Family Member Placed in Nursing Home. PSS expects future results to be similar to the 2013 results listed below.

- 39% of cases were consults only (*i.e. received information and guidance requested*)
- 10% of cases were referred elsewhere  
*(i.e. elder's needs determined to be more effectively served by another agency)*
- 41% of cases were resolved (*i.e. obtained housing, services, medical care needed*)
- 6% of cases client declined services  
*(in most of these cases, clients were not ready to make changes in their situations)*
- 1% nursing home placement
- 3% client deceased

**100% TOTAL**

## **OUTCOMES**

In 2014, PSS analyzed client statistics to identify the specific outcomes listed below: For 2015, PSS incorporated these specific outcomes (as well as others) into the monthly client statistics.

- Clients report they are able to make important decisions with guidance and support from PSS and/or they feel supported during stressful /difficult life events
- Clients had bills fully paid, a budget established, debt paid off and their rent was current
- Accessed resources such as food stamps
- Obtained health insurance
- Obtained housing or maintained their current housing
- Used PSS to achieve coordination among medical providers, family, and other care providers

- Health Care Proxy, Durable Power of Attorney, Will completed
  - Accessed services that helped them stay home/prevent nursing home placement
  - Maintained recovery from substance use
  - Had multiple outcomes as described above

## **FINANCIAL PROFILE OF YEAR END 2015:**

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**Income** **\$242,375**  
*(Includes income from Endowment, Investments, Fundraising, Fees and contributions)*

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$219,215</b>
<i>(Includes employee salaries, benefits, training and supervision, malpractice insurance, and office expenses—rent, telephones, email account, office supplies)</i>	
<b>Income Minus Expense</b>	<b>\$23,160</b>

**Income Minus Expense** **\$23,160**

**Of note, the following factors helped off-set the expected deficit of \$4,356:**

- **Transfer from savings:** \$10,000
  - **Receipt of Funds for distribution to the community:** \$8,595
  - **Unplanned income from the grants/donations:** \$8,446

## **AFFILIATIONS:**

Paine Senior Services values collaboration with other community providers. In addition to the direct services we provide to seniors in Cambridge, we strive to have a wider community impact. To that end, both social workers participate in various community collaborations—i.e. serving on agency Boards and community task forces.

- Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services, SCES Board Chair
  - Somerville-Cambridge Interagency Task Force (SCIT), Chair Steering Committee
  - Cambridge and Somerville Aging and Mental Health Task Force, co-Facilitator
  - CHNA 17 (Community Health Network Area), Chair Steering Committee

## **GOALS FOR 2016:**

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Paine Senior Services strives to continue its vital role in the community and its ongoing mission as an outgrowth of First Parish's larger call for social justice.

- PSS will continue to provide direct service to the community, helping elders attain affordable housing, health insurance and medication coverage, and healthy, productive lives.
  - PSS will strengthen community partnerships to address concerns of elders, especially in the areas of counseling/mental health and substance abuse.
  - PSS will evaluate our role in the community given the evolving needs and resources of the community.
  - PSS will reach out beyond our current network to inform the Cambridge community of our mission, with special intent to reach out to businesses and private organizations.
  - PSS social workers will apply to become Medicare providers in order to bill for in-home counseling services.

Paine Senior Services is grateful for the support that First Parish has given over the years. Without the generosity of your support, we would not be able to help those in need.