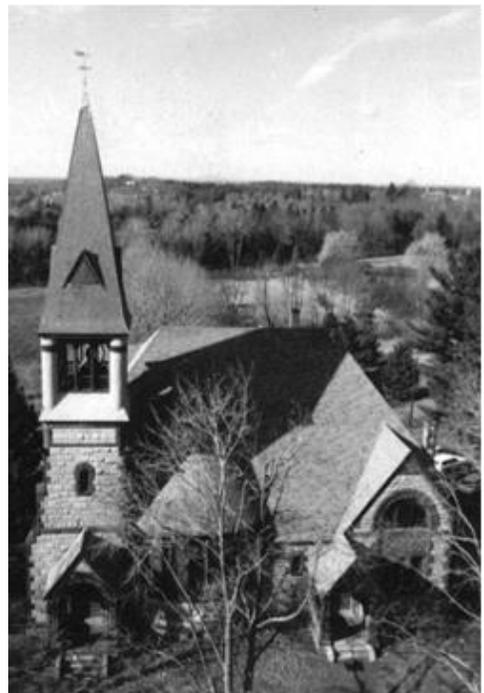


The First Parish in
Lincoln

Annual Report

2020-2021



Lincoln,

Massachusetts

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021
On-line via Zoom – 7:00 p.m.
Barbara Sampson, Moderating**

The Agenda will include:

1. Invocation
--- Jenny Rankin
2. Motion to receive 2020–2021 Annual Report
3. Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting, June 2, 2020
4. Ministerial Report
--- Jenny Rankin
5. Parish Committee Report
--- Nick Covino
Including:
Election of Minister Search Committee
VOTE of the Congregation
Report of the Governance Task Force --- Dwight Gertz
6. Deacons' Report
--- Paula Waterman
7. Transition Team
--- Gina Halsted
Including: Confirmation of FPL's Values, Mission, Vision
VOTE of the Congregation
8. Awards
--- Tucker Smith and Peter Pease
9. Youth Programs
--- Terry Green
10. Adult Programs and Racial Justice Advocates
--- Mary Helen Lorenz
11. Outreach and Social Action
--- Deanna Laferriere
12. Election of Officers, Deacons and Parish Committee Members
--- Tom DeNormandie, Nominating Committee
VOTE of the Congregation
13. Generous Giving
--- Sarah Andrysiak
14. Financial Report and Proposed Budget for year 2021-2022
--- John Krzywicki, Treasurer
VOTE of the Congregation
15. Any other business properly brought before the meeting.

Adjournment

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 2, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

The Annual Meeting 2020 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Moderator Barbara Sampson. It was an unusual meeting via Zoom during Covid19. Barbara provided the guidelines for the meeting.

Invocation. Interim Minister Jenny Rankin gave the Invocation and acknowledgement of Covid pandemic, racial rage and imperatives for social distancing.

Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting 2019. A MOTION to approve the Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting and to receive the 2020 Annual Report was duly made and unanimously passed. Said Minutes shall correct the name of Awardee Jane O'Rourke and said Annual Report shall include Fred Richardson's date of death as April 22, 2020.

Ministerial Report. Interim Minister Jenny Rankin said overnight almost everything we do is online and now we grieve over the nation's racial strife. Now more than ever, we need this community to be strong. We need to be a gathering place and a North Star. Thank you to Meredith our Student Minister. Thank you to Sarah for a broad array of capabilities. Thank you to Gert for her almost 23 years of service to strengthen this community. No words can say enough about her time at FPL. Covid 19 demands that we live our core values. This time of racial injustice is another opportunity for us to lead and contribute. "We are in a marathon of many sprints." We have what we need to meet this challenge. The next months and years will be demanding. Jenny is so grateful to have this chance to serve in ministry with all of us.

Parish Committee Report. Nick invited people to please read his report. He thanked all of the committees that are an extension of the PC. Highlights included: New task forces. Decisions about whether the sanctuary should be open or closed. And a Parish Committee focus on transparency. Nick thanked Treasurer, John Krzywicki and the Finance team for considerable financial oversight and budget detailing throughout the year. Nick thanked Ralph Smith for leading the Personnel Committee (a new role). He thanked Peter Sugar, who with help from Tim Moynihan led the Facilities Committee, overseeing a new roof and new parking lot for the Parish House. Nick thanked Sarah Andrysiak who contributed in a number of important ways, leading our Generous Giving stewardship campaign. Nick thanked everyone for their contributions.

Deacon's Report. Deanna framed her remarks from the perspective of having served as the Deacons' Chair for the last two years. She has placed an emphasis on open communication, monthly check-ins with Deacons, and creating a welcoming atmosphere in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. All ten Deacons took part in a retreat hosted by Jenny. Deacons worked effectively to move from Sunday Morning Services in the sanctuary to Services by Zoom that have brought more people "to church" than has often happened at our "in situ" Sunday Services. The Deacons plan to have 11 services throughout the summer. Dianna expressed the sentiments of all in saying that Jenny's willingness to stay with First Parish for a 4th year is a silver lining for our community. Deanna then reported on the highlights of the Music Committee (Joan Mansfield, Chair), Care Committee (Kathy Huber, Chair), Flower (Nancy Henderson), Welcoming (Jennie Morse), and Hospitality (Mimsy Beckwith) Committees' work, and urged us all to read each report in the Parish Annual Report.

Awards. Peter Pease and Tucker Smith presented the following awards:

But first, Barbara gave thanks and tribute to FPL's staff: Jenny, Margit, Meredith and Sarah. Barbara remarked more fully on Gert's history, noting that while Gert will be celebrated in full at

our Sunday, June 7th Church Service, it is essential that our Annual Meeting acknowledge the significant contributions Gert has made to our congregational life over the past 23 years. Gert has our deepest gratitude. She has been the hub of our wheel. Gert has invested deeply in bringing out the best in us.

Rookie of the Year Award to Heather Ring for jumping in with both feet! Served as Deacon and Touch of Christmas co-chair and as a parent with her daughter in all of our programs.

Deacon's Award to Deanne Laferriere for her deft, quiet leadership and thoughtful gathering style as Chairwoman of our Deacons for the past two years.

Parish Award to Ralph Smith for being the right person in the right place at the right time and guiding us through our critical Personnel objectives. Ralph noted what a great team effort it has been.

MVP Award to Chris Andrysiak who year after year, issue after issue, challenge after challenge, has stepped forward with "deft skill, profound grace and quiet humility."

Lifetime Achievement Award to Peter and Susan Pease who are now official residents of Martha's Vineyard. For being the couple who could be found in so many different corners of our lives. Susan has served literally 1000s of meals for FPL. Peter has sung from the choir loft for decades, worked as chair of the deacons and chair for the PC. One thing, Peter noted, is that we do marvelously well is helping one another be our best selves.

Report of the Transition Team. R.L. Smith would like to give an award to Gina Halstead who has been the best co-chair he has ever worked with in his life. R.L urged us all to please read the Transition Team's report. In the coming year, the Transition Team will be working with the congregation to finish the process of defining our values, to understand who we consider to be the "neighbors" that we serve, and to develop a mission statement and vision statement. R.L. thanked the entire Transition Team for all of their hard work.

Report of the Youth Programs Committee Report. Steve Brand discussed the committee's role to support Margit, FPL's Director of Religious Education. He described a number of programs that the committee has undertaken, noting that there is a struggle with getting children to come to classes but much success around the workshops and the OWL program. Margit has supplemented adult teachers with high school leaders. Steve gave Becca Fasciano special recognition for the solar power vehicle project for Earth Day. He observed that Margit articulates what needs to be said and says it at the right time. The YPC, with the congregation's help, needs to identify those things which parents feel their children need in order to get young people to participate in the church school program. Margit has helped serve the community with virtual offerings. Steve said that he, and co-chairwoman, Elizabeth Robbat, are stepping down from their leadership roles. New co-chairs and new committee members will be leading the effort going forward.

Report of the Adult Programs Committee. Mary Helen Lorenz discussed being able to push forward three programs. Food for Thought suppers were successful with the last one in early March. She thanked Jackie Lenth and John Krzywicki for being extraordinary chefs and numerous others for executing these suppers. There was great learning for all, including potential new members. Mary Helen listed numerous adult programs, small groups and numerous programs around the timely topic of race. Ken Hurd, who is on the anti-racism task force, talked about FPL making a difference on the topic of race. It is time, Ken note, that "white people ... do something".

Report of the Outreach Committee. Chairperson Larry Buell reported for Outreach, FPL Green and the Community Engagement Task Force. Outreach and FPL Green efforts are included in the Annual Report. Since September the Outreach Committee has been in surge mode. Never has Larry seen such a swift response to the crises to help people in need. This might not have been possible with previously accomplished groundwork and successes. FPL Green had a capacity crowd at Climate Sunday. Larry noted that it important not to let volunteer fatigue overtake us.

Report of Generous Giving Committee. Sarah Andrysiak gave a report full of hope and thanksgiving. Sarah thanked the committee and advisory group for their successful work. Sarah gave us her report as a lovely poem regaling the achievements of the committee and our congregation's members during this time.

Election of Officers, Deacons and Parish Committee Members. Nominating Committee member Tom DeNormandie expressed the Parish's appreciation of the several elected Officer/Committee Members who will retire this year as listed in the Annual Report.

The committee's proposed slate of Officers and Elected Members for 2020 is before the membership (see Annual Report); a MOTION was made to accept the slate as proposed, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report and Consideration and Action on the Proposed Budget for 2019–2020. In addition to his written report and presentation, Treasurer John Krzywicki proposed two motions in specific order.

MOTION was made to:

Approve the budget, including the deficit of expenses over revenues of \$184,000, which will be made up by any surplus from this year, and then primarily from our investment funds. (This budget assumes the best case – we are open – but then the worst case re revenues and expenses. The expectation is for a smaller deficit.)

Approve the FY 21 only a waiver in the drawdown of our investment funds (the ones available for funding operations) so that the % cap does not apply. That cap would result in a FY21 drawdown of not more than \$100,000. The new FY21 maximum drawdown from funds under the cap would be \$153,000.

The Motion passed, with a few members expressing a “No” vote.

With no further business before the Parish, a MOTION to adjourn was made and unanimously approved, with applause from all in attendance. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Watkinson, Parish Clerk

MINISTRY & STAFF REPORTS

INTERIM MINISTER'S REPORT

““It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” Charles Dickens wrote as he began *A Tale of Two Cities*. Perhaps we know a little of what he meant as we reflect back on the year just passed, our second when church buildings remained closed due to the pandemic, and we discovered how to “do church” in other ways. Despite the challenges, isolation, and stress, we have emerged with a splendid stewardship campaign result, a congregation that has remained intact and faithful on Zoom worship, whose morale is high, and with enthusiasm running high for joining local anti-racism work in Lincoln. In odd and surprising ways, it has been a good year, although probably one we wouldn’t choose to repeat.

A minister does not work alone. For two years, I have worked in partnership with Parish Committee chair Nick Covino, and I thank him for his leadership, engagement, accessibility to me, and collaboration. Nick and I met regularly, speaking on phone or by email, with the good communication between parish chair and minister which is essential. He was indefatigable in his efforts on behalf of the congregation.

An interim minister works in close collaboration with the Transition Team, formed specifically for the purpose of accomplished the 5 interim tasks. I thank Gina Halsted for chairing this group, their term extended from two to three years, with thoughtfulness, quiet tact, ongoing energy and grace. She has been indomitable in capturing the congregation’s insights and wisdom, gained through countless small group and large group discussions over the years, and gathered together by Gina in a written final report.

I also thank Paula Waterman, head of the deacons, with whom I worked closely on worship, adult spiritual renewal offerings, and the wider spiritual and emotional care of the parish. Paula’s deep spirituality, love of learning and strong leadership during difficult conversations have been a great gift to the parish.

I thank our staff—Sarah, Margit, Silvia and Ian-- who have soldiered on, week after week, with humor, engagement, and honesty during a year which demanded they re-create their job again and again and simply weather the storms of constantly changing outside events and internal parish demands. It was a joy to welcome Silvia to our staff team; she has been solid and dependable, stepping in at a difficult time and making the transition look seamless. During this challenging year, we’ve grown closer to one another as a staff, and I’m so grateful for that spirit of “we can do it” and “we will support one another” which I felt so strongly from staff this year.

“Connection” was a key theme for the year.

Returning last fall after summer break, I visited parishioners in person at their homes, meeting outside on garden or patio. I encouraged the deacons to restart a smaller phone tree to reach out to people who live alone which they did with kindness. I met once a week with each staff person encouraging them in their efforts to re-envision their program area completely as well as reach out personally to people in their sector of church life. I continued meeting weekly with a small group over coffee. In October, I invited Andy Falender to lead a few outdoor walks. This morphed into a weekly “Meditation Hike” that continued on, in all kinds of weather, to the end of May, over 35 in all. It gave people a chance to be “together,” in silence, in nature, a contemplative spot in a constantly changing world.

I am grateful for the faithfulness of this community; I have felt throughout the year that you continue to “show up” for one another, me, the staff. Attendance remained strong at Zoom worship with often 80 to 100 “screens” visible on a Sunday morning. Sarah Klockowski brought her considerable preaching abilities as well as her tech talent; Margit’s creativity, humor and spirituality shone through on the Time for All Ages, and Ian laid the strong musical foundation which helped to nourish our souls. Deacons offered powerful prayers from their hearts and found other parishioners to do the same. With Sarah’s leadership, we were able to pre-record a Christmas Eve service, shooting in the sanctuary through multiple takes; families and children participated which made it extra special. The deacons hosted a Candlelight Walk Through of the sanctuary; with the lighted Christmas tree outside, the sanctuary looked magical in a light snow and people could reconnect with the sacred space they hold so dear. At Christmas and Easter, the deacons, minister and staff created special bags that were hand delivered by parishioners to peoples’ homes to try to spread the message: we are all connected, we remember you, you matter. Sarah led a powerful Good Friday service online which included communion, using bread and grape juice that had been delivered in the Holy Week bag.

I am grateful to all the lay leaders who help program areas like religious education, music, outreach, welcoming, adult education continue to move forward and thrive, as best they can, during this time. I thank the Racial Justice Advocacy team in particular for its brave and hard work to keep anti-racism work in the forefront. As we close this year, there is energy coalescing within the parish, and within the local Lincoln community, to make this effort stronger and bolder next year.

Despite Covid, the Transition Team continued in its third year, leading the congregation in a series of cores values, mission and vision. I was surprised and delighted by the number of people who attended these online sessions. Out of them grew a robust new mission and vision statement which will be extraordinarily helpful to the Search Committee as they try to portray to ministerial candidates the essence of this community. A congregation is supposed to be steered, not by a small group or a minister, but by its mission statement, the “North Star” in guiding new directions forward.

As I reach the end of my third year, I’m reflecting on what we have accomplished together and what “unfinished business” remains. I know that candidates will have many questions about former ministers and their time at FPL; I expect some of those questions will be around Manish’ tenure and his experience of racism in the Lincoln community. I expect that next year we’ll be continuing our discussions around the end of his ministry, in light of all you have learned in the past few years in the field of race and racism. I hear the concern about the aging demographic within the parish and have recommended to the Parish Committee that exit interviews be conducted with departing leaders. It’s important for a congregation to have a robust pipeline of emerging leaders. I’ve heard you say you want newer and younger leaders. What is your process for inviting people into leadership, helping them identify and name their gifts for ministry, train and mentor them as they go, and then thank them when they are finished, and ask them what leadership at FPL has been like for them? Attention to detail at each stage of the process will help ensure that their experience is positive and that more people want to step up to lead. Sometimes, churches say they want “new people” to get involved, to lead projects, and then when the “new people” step in and do things in a different and new way, that is difficult for long-time members to accept. Gauging where you are on that continuum is important.

In every church, there are “sacred cows,” hot button issues which can be difficult to discuss. Differences on politics, the national conversation on race, how small groups should be run, the

influence of long-time members vs. newer leaders, outreach, music, and probably many more. I've watched you try to bring more of these "into the light" and discuss them openly rather than relegate them to parking lot discussions. There is still a long way to go but progress has been made. You are trying to create a culture where it feels safe for people to speak up and say what is really on their mind, a culture where conflict doesn't send people running for the hills but can be managed wisely and in the open, a culture where there is a real diversity of life experience, spiritual perspective, and world view. This is hard work and little by little, you are sticking with it.

As I have said before, I am enormously grateful for the ability to walk with you during this interim time, and in particular, during this pandemic. I can't imagine a better congregation with whom to share this peculiar, challenging, enlightening historical moment in time. I look forward to our work together next year as you prepare to welcome a new settled minister for your next chapter.

In faith,

Rev. Jenny M. Rankin, Interim Minister

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'S REPORT

As part of the self-reflection part of my annual review, Jenny asked, "What inspired you this year?" Taking a broad look at the definition of "inspire", I have to admit that Covid-19 was the biggest inspiration for the 2020-2021 church year! Without it there are curriculum, practices, and people we may never have connected with if we had a "normal" year. The global pandemic challenged us to think outside the box, to embrace new understandings of how we come together, create new delivery for religious education, faith formation, spiritual nurturance, and play, and helped us reach-out in ways we hadn't thought of before. That said, I can think of many other ways I would prefer to be inspired than Covid... a profound book or piece of art, a glorious piece of music, a walk in nature (with my dogs), children laughing... etc.

Summer 2020 (July and half-August): was spent keeping tabs on Covid-19 trends and predictions and trying to create programs within those constraints. The focus and goals of RE shifted from delivering religious education to children and youth with a side of parent empowerment, to focusing on supporting faith formation at home while maintaining children's and families' links to First Parish in Lincoln.

September 2020 – June 2021: is the church year. Children and families couldn't come to FPL, so FPL went to them. We entered homes through Zoom on Sundays, brought items to households, and invited people to outdoor spaces when possible.

With the authors' permission, we were able to modify the OWL curriculum for 8th graders and offered "OWL: Taking Flight" with more classes attended remotely than in-person. Though not 100% as wonderful as usual, it was very good and appreciated by the families we served.

Crossing Paths/Neighboring Faiths was/is offered for 6th-7th graders from January to June. All new curriculum is being used for the virtual learning environment. A challenge but do-able.

Children in grades pre-K to grade 5 received monthly "Parish to Porch Kits" and weekly postcards. We held outdoor events for all ages.

Over the course of the year, the playground was restored to playable condition! Peter Sugar and the facilities committee helped make the imaginings of FPL's children come true. Though we

are not meeting in person, the playground has been a draw for families – with the school building project going on, there are no other playscapes in Lincoln for people to use. The Lincoln Family Association has recently resumed their “Playgroup” and meet on the playground on Friday mornings. This is a key feature for FPL families and a community service for Lincoln.

Religious Education By the Numbers

As part of the self-reflection part of my annual review, Jenny asked, “What inspired you this year?” Taking a broad look at the definition of “inspire”, I have to admit that Covid-19 was the biggest inspiration for the 2020-2021 church year! Without it there are curriculum, practices, and people we may never have connected with if we had a “normal” year. The global pandemic challenged us to think outside the box, to embrace new understandings of how we come together, create new delivery for religious education, faith formation, spiritual nurturance, and play, and helped us reach-out in ways we hadn’t thought of before. That said, I can think of many other ways I would prefer to be inspired than Covid... a profound book or piece of art, a glorious piece of music, a walk in nature (with my dogs), children laughing... etc.

In the 10 active months of the church year, RE...

- Participated in worship service planning and preparation. Produced and presented 40 “Time for All Ages” worship segments with topics linked to the worship themes. Presentations included music, media, and mayhem.
- Planned, procured, produced and presented 350 individual Parish to Porch kits for 50 children – members and friends. These included “back to school and church” bags, bags based on Soul Matters themes, and others.
- Planned, procured, produced and presented 90 family Parish to Porch kits for 30 families – members and friends. These include the December “Advent Workshop in a Box”, April’s butterfly growing kit, and (coming at the time of writing – completed by the time of FPL annual meeting) May’s “Runaway with Ray” book, materials, and event.
- With the YPC, planned monthly in-person, outdoor, Covid protocol appropriate events – including picnic and pumpkin picking, nature walk, ice skating, playground clean up, “Runaway with Ray” event.
- Sent just under 2000 postcards to 66 children in Lincoln, Concord, Wayland, and Weston. These weekly “Wiggle Cards” gave children ideas for ways to move their bodies or to meditate to help balance school and stress – they also reminded kids that FPL is here for them. (And kids LOVE snail mail – we just plain made them happy!)
- Produced 40 weekly “Parish News”, ‘News Brief’, and “RE-blasts” (80 e-blasts); keeping FPL members, friends, and families informed of upcoming events and offering “Weekly Prayer for...” series for spiritual nurturance.

Throughout the year, and in connection with the work of the Safe Congregations Task Force, a portion of time each week has been devoted to keeping tabs on Covid protocols and trends; especially as they impact decisions which impact church life.

Applying these protocols to what can and cannot be done – and what should and should not be done – was supported by sharing ideas with UU and UCC affiliated colleagues serving in Metro West area churches (though Zoom allowed others to stow-away in some meetings). How

to respond to Covid and re-opening questions underlined all we did this year.

The members of the Youth Programs Committee were a tremendous resource of knowledge, creativity, willingness to serve, and support. During 2020-2021, they were Terry Green (Chair), Joan Mansfield (Minutes), Elizabeth Robbat-Kelly, Hannah Stevenson, Hannah Bureau-Sias, Anna Bishop, with Jean Welsh as our Parish Committee liaison. Thank you one and all!

Respectfully Submitted, May 2021

Margit Griffith, Director of Religious Education

MINISTERIAL INTERN & COMMUNICATIONS/PROGRAMMING COORDINATOR REPORT

This historical moment of intersecting pandemics forced the staff to think about ministry in new ways. In my dual role as ministerial intern and communications coordinator, much of my time was focused on bringing our shared life and community online. We sought to create a virtual sacred space of connection and comfort in challenging times, while also calling us to be who we say we are as a community.

Adapting to the new world, we learned about online platforms and resources to integrate into our Sunday services and various programming. I collaborated with and sometimes lead teams to produce several online worship experiences throughout the year, including our pre-recorded, intergenerational Christmas Eve Service, the Solstice Service, a Taizé Service, the Good Friday Service, and more. Looking ahead, I was asked to research livestreaming infrastructure and installation in preparation for our eventual return to the sanctuary, with the goal of offering a high-quality online worship experience for those who will continue to worship with us remotely.

It has been an honor and blessing to journey with this community through such a unique and challenging year. I look forward to seeing what next year has in store as we reimagine ministry once again, creating a new, multiplatform approach to our life together.

Sarah Klockowski, Ministerial Intern & Communications/Programming Coordinator

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Nothing like starting a new position in the middle of a pandemic lock-down. With that said, I can barely believe that it has been almost a year. The next year ought to be a more normal one.

I am grateful for the welcome and support of Nick Covino, Reverend Jenny, the staff, and the congregation and appreciate everybody's patience. I was thankful for a well thought out onboarding plan that was an invaluable help to get my bearings. I was blown away by the spirit of the congregation, their commitment to one another, their community, and the staff.

With many firsts for me at First Parish, the Lenten Booklet, Stewardship Campaign, Budget Planning, the Annual Report, facilitating a rental to name a few, and none of these quite the same as in previous years, it sure was a challenging year. It made for a rewarding and interesting experience. This being said, I am looking forward to moving towards a new normal and a settling into more of a routine in the office for the coming year.

There are several projects on my list for this summer including organization and creation of electronic files of important church documents and blueprints, implementing a new database,

ensuring improved Wi-Fi in the Parish House for the return of the staff in September, and some smaller projects.

In closing I would like to thank the personnel committee and the members of First Parish for giving me this opportunity, it truly has been a pleasure.

Respectfully submitted,

Silvia Dieckow, Parish Administrator

CHURCH LIFE**STATISTICS**

The following statistics indicate additions, losses, and changes in the life of The First Parish since our last Annual Report that was prepared for the Annual Meeting on June 2, 2020.

New Members

Caitlin Hogue May 18,2021

Necrology (M = Member)

Susan Burt

Date of Death

May 4,2021

Harold Hallstein

October 7,2020

Baptisms and Dedications

None

Ended or Transferred Memberships

None

Membership Count as of May 31, 2021

Active Members: 312

Inactive Members: 26

Total Members: 333

Active Friends: 39

Monthly Parish to Porch Kits (pre-K to +/-6th)

Households: 30 with 50 children

Weekly Postcards (pre-K to 8th): 66

Crossing Paths/Neighboring Faiths (6-7th): +/-6

OWL: Taking Flight (8th): 13

Weekly RE-blast: 124 emails with an average 43% engagement

ADMINISTRATION, PROPERTY, AND FINANCE

PARISH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

This was another interesting year for the parish. It was full of challenges on a number of levels most all of which were successfully navigated.

A Church as large as ours has a number of people to thank at the end of the year, but the most important person to single out this year, in my opinion, is Rev. Jenny Rankin. For more than a year, Jenny has overseen the activities of several churches not just one. She has been the principal leader and resource person for a *church in transition*. This is meant educating church leaders about the work that must be done during an interim period and being a guide and a resource person to those that were facilitating this change. As did leaders of many organizations, she oversaw a *church reinventing itself* during a national period of pandemic, political strain and racial distress. This meant examining policies to keep the Parish safe, negotiating disagreements among our members and creating opportunities to provide worship, social and educational programs, and supporting staff and volunteers as they led their way through a most uncertain time. While serving and leading the above, she preached, comforted, educated, counseled, consulted to, and *served a traditional church* with its weekly services, social engagement projects, educational programs, governance, spiritual needs, and business demands. She has supported leaders, encouraged open discussion, refereed differences, and promoted a great amount of self-reflection while being an even handed, level-headed and inspirational leader both at the front and in the middle of our congregation. We owe a great deal of thanks and appreciation to this remarkable professional for her leadership.

With the able management skills of Treasurer John Krzywicki and Parish Administrator Silvia Dieckow, the year will end with a small surplus from Operations. The uncertainties of the financial demands of running a church during COVID were met by the congregation allowing the Treasurer to access additional funds up to \$25,000 but these were not used. Thanks to the generosity of the parish and the work of the Generous Giving Committee, the budget for the upcoming year will make use of the Invested Funds at a planned cap of 4% with a forecast of another small surplus. John will discuss this budget with all interested parishioners at an independent meeting.

Among the highlights of the year was the ability of the church to continue to provide financial support for everyone who has been a regular employee of the church. Where regular activities were canceled or required less time, those who have provided necessary services in normal times were maintained on the payroll out of respect for their commitment to FPL and to insure their place when regular order returns. With the generosity of Sylvia Perry, regular communication of the actions and decisions of the Parish Committee were communicated to the congregation each month. In addition to these policy issues, the Parish Committee provided support and consultation to the Transition Team, Safe Congregations Task Force and several church groups. The following were also accomplished:

1. Assimilating the talents of a new Parish Administrator

With large shoes to fill and a pandemic to challenge her, Ms. Silvia Dieckow has brought considerable competence, organization, and a wonderful spirit to this new position.

2. A new Process for and the Selection of the Settled Minister Search Committee

Following consultation from several UUA and UCC consultants and some reading of best practices, the PC invited the congregation to select 4 of the 7 members of the Settled Minister's Search Committee. Three appointments were made with input from the Deacons to complement the committee. Thanks to all who participated in this process and, especially, to these seven members for their commitment and generosity.

3. Review and renewal of the FPL Governance Process

After about a year of thoughtful consideration, a Task Force on FPL Governance has produced an "Owner's Manual" along with several new recommendations. The intention of this Task Force was to bring greater clarity to how decisions are made and to create some new policies for a more efficient operation. The committee produced a significant document that will, by their recommendation, continue to be updated to help the Church look to the future with greater organizational competence. The great deal of thoughtful work and practical help by this group is appreciated.

4. Parish Council

This committee of Committee Chairs met on alternate months to share information and to discuss parish business. Notably, this group processed the decision to post the Black Lives Matter banner and its continuation. This group has an opportunity to serve both as a vehicle for sharing information and an opportunity for a majority of the parish to hold discussions of important issues through committees and among these chairs.

5. An updated Personnel Manual

After many years, the FPL Personnel policies and procedures were updated and presented in a new Personnel Manual. The Task Force was headed by the members of the newly created Personnel Committee and it brought greater clarity to job descriptions, a plan for regular personnel reviews, and additional benefits to our employees.

6. Parish Playground

On time and below budget, thanks to the Facilities Committee, the playground was reconstructed this year. This project not only demolished the former structure, but it repaired some of the hardscape of the play area to improve safety and preserve the property.

7. Posting of the BLM banner.

Group discussions within the committees of the Parish Council were able to discuss the desire to show support for Black and Brown people following the death of Mr. Floyd and others.

8. Support for the Opt-Up energy initiative

At the request of the FPL Green Initiative, the church made a commitment to use 100% renewable energy. In addition, as an expression of our Call to Ministry, a banner was displayed to encourage the town to follow suit.

9. Closer partnership with St. Josephs and St. Julia's church

FPL has organized two clothing drives in partnership with the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the joint parish of St. Joseph and St Julia in Weston. The St. V de P Society asked First Parish to

complement the good work being done by their Food Pantry and create several clothing drives for their clients and others during the winter and spring.

10. Signage

In response to several requests to the PC for signage approval, a small and efficient Task Force prepared a new policy for such requests to be discussed and approved.

11. Minister's Council of Advisors

Following one of the recommendations of the Shared Ministry Review, a consultative group was created and staffed to provide a confidential sounding board for the pastor.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Covino, Chair

Parish Committee: Chris Andrysiak, Nick Covino (chair), Dwight Gertz, Pete Hussey, Carrie Marotta, Tim Moynihan, Jane O'Rourke, Jessica Packineau, Jean Welsh

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Personnel Committee was very active in FY 2021 on a variety of human resource projects.

The first project this year was to hire a new Congregational Administrator to replace our long-term administrator Gert McDermott. As the position had evolved over Gert's 23-year career at First Parish the initial step involved a complete rethink of the position. As part of the team Katy Walker graciously volunteered to assist the personnel committee and lend her many years of experience at First Parish to the hiring process which ended with a wonderful new addition to the staff, Silvia Dieckow.

The Personnel Committee assisted in the revision of the responsibilities and job description of the Ministerial Intern/Communications Adult Programs Coordinator, Sarah Klockowski. The committee members also researched and recommended updates to the staff benefit package. Throughout the year the committee functioned as a resource to staff and other church committees when personnel related questions were raised.

As we close out the fiscal year members of the committee are active in assisting the Interim Minister in the annual staff review process.

The member of the committee are Gus Browne, Carrie Marotta, Jane O'Rourke, and Ralph Smith.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph O. Smith, Chair

NOMINATING COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following slate of Officers, Deacons and Parish Committee members for election by the membership at our Annual Meeting 2021.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Nominee</u>
<u>Officers</u>		
Moderator	1 year	Barbara Sampson
Treasurer	1 year	John Krzywicki
Assistant Treasurer	1 year	Mary Briggs
Clerk	1 year	Sylvia Perry

The Nominating Committee expresses our congregation's appreciation to all Officers for their work this past year.

Board of Deacons (10 members)

Member	3 years	Stephen Brand
Member	3 years	Katie Green
Chairperson	1 year	Paula Waterman

The Nominating Committee expresses appreciation on behalf of our congregation to Melinda Bruno-Smith and Barbara Slayter for their three years of service as Deacons.

In addition to the new Deacons nominated above, Sarah Bishop, Gus Browne, Andy Clark, Doug Crosby, James DeNormandie, Deanna Laferriere, Tom Risser and Paula Waterman will continue to serve in their terms as Deacons in the coming year.

Parish Committee (9 members)

Member	3 years	David Elmes
Member	3 years	Jackie Length
Member	2 years	Jennie Morris
Chairperson	1 year	Chris Andrysiak

The Nominating Committee expresses appreciation on behalf of our congregation to Tim Moynihan for his six years of service on the Parish Committee, including two as Chair, to Nick Covino for his four years of service, including the last two as Chair, and Carrie Marotta for her three years of service.

In addition to the new Parish Committee members nominated above, Chris Andrysiak, Dwight Gertz, Peter Hussey, Jane O'Rourke, Jessica Packineau and Jean Welsh will continue to serve in their terms on the Parish Committee in the coming year.

Nominating Committee (5 members)

Member	1 year	Abigail Adams
Member	1 year	Kate Dahmen
Member	1 year	Tom DeNormandie
Member	1 year	Joe Robbat
Chairperson	1 year	Linn Elmes

The Nominating Committee expresses appreciation on behalf of our congregation to Jennie Morris for her one year of service on the Nominating Committee.

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee:

Tom DeNormandie, Linn Elmes, Jennie Morris, Joe Robbat and Ray Shepard

FACILITIES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Committee has worked diligently during the past year to ensure the completion of projects already in progress, to attend to issues which arise during day-to-day operations as well as well as conducting the necessary maintenance for the Church property (many small items, too minor to require a detailed explanation).

The major project this year has been the reconstruction of the Playground: this included the cleaning up of the landscape surrounding the Playground, installation of new ground surfacing, demolition of the outdated equipment and installation of a 'pirate ship', slides, as well as a gazebo outfitted for 'gaga ball'. The work had been contracted, with the exception of outfitting of the gazebo, the latter work being carried out by a small group of volunteers (Craig and Jona Donaldson, and Gordon Wilcox) which was much appreciated.

Other projects included:

- Installation of new doors to the six rooms on the second floor of the administrative wing of the Parish House
- Replacement of the lighting in the Auditorium with new fixtures for better quality of lighting as well as reduced maintenance (with long-life LED light bulbs)
- Replacement of blinds on the south facing windows of the administrative wing of the Parish House second floor (again, with our thanks, by volunteer labor provided by Mark Goetemann) to reduce glare while still allowing for transparency.
- Repair of the stone wall on the west side of the Playground
- Recommendation to the Parish Committee, in support of our Green Energy Committee, to opt up to 100% Clean Energy usage (see also full report of the Green Energy Committee).
Note: the solar panels on the roof of the Parish House, installed last year, have worked well during 2020/21, producing 9% more electricity than the anticipated annual mean value, and, post COVID-19, will produce about what the Parish House consumes annually.

Projects remaining on the long-term agenda, but on hold due to financial constraints are:

- Replacing the inefficient and, in many cases, faulty windows in the Parish House
- Installing a/c to the Parish House offices (with the possibility of also extending a/c to the lower floor)

A major effort currently under way is to have the ability to livestream our services as well as other significant events to members of our Church who are unable for a variety of reasons to attend in person. This effort has now reached the point of our interviewing a number of potential consultants to discover the best way to achieve our goals for the most reasonable costs. There is a separate committee charged with this task, and the Facilities Committee has been asked to assist in this effort.

In all our work we are in constant touch with the Parish Committee to keep everyone informed of our progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter C. Sugar, Chair

Facilities Committee Members: David Elmes, Ed Kern, Thornton Ring, Peter Sugar (chair), Tim Moynihan (ex-officio, Parish Committee liaison), Silvia Dieckow (ex-officio, Parish Administrator)

GENEROUS GIVING COMMITTEE REPORT

The primary activity of the Generous Giving Committee is the spring Stewardship Campaign.

We have had an extraordinary Stewardship Campaign this year, reflecting the community's generosity, optimism, and engagement. During this year of pandemic, First Parish has helped community members to connect, serve, learn and care for one another and the wider world. For many, the pandemic highlighted how important FPL is in our lives.

- **This spring, we raised over \$450,000, an increase of more than 13% over last year.** This is the largest raise since the spring of 2010.
- With the generous participation in stewardship, **FPL can fund the proposed operating budget with a sustainable withdrawal from our Endowment Funds.**
- **The number of pledges increased by 6%**, with seven first-time pledgers and 14 pledges from people who pledged in the past but did not participate last year. Pledged had been on a downward trend since 2007. May this be the start of an upward trend!

The theme of the campaign was "sourdough starter." Like First Parish, sourdough starter is handed down across generations and is made of simple ingredients. First Parish is the "wild yeast" that leavens our daily bread. Clearly, we would deliver dozens of sourdough boules and jars of starter to thank community members for their generosity.

In light of COVID-19, the campaign was digital. We are grateful to the communications and technical savvy of Sarah Klockowski who kept our website content up to date and designed and managed regular Stewardship emails. To reach everyone, we mailed letters to our lower tech community members, and a postcard (with a photograph of bread) to those we hadn't heard from halfway through the campaign.

Stewardship testimonials during the ZOOM church service highlighted the importance of First Parish to our community. We heard from Barbara O’Neil, Del Welch (from Maine), Joan Mansfield and Carolyn duPont (a mother-daughter duo), Tim Moynihan, and the Chair Ladies (Sarah Bishop, Jackie Lenth, Christina Rago-Brown, Lucy Sachs, Tucker Smith in a video from the rainbow chairs).

In addition to the Stewardship Campaign, Generous Giving is encouraging community members to include FPL in their estate plans and developing programming to support conversations about giving as a faith practice. We look forward to implementing some of our planning work next year.

Finally, in response to a request by the Finance Committee, The Generous Giving Committee researched the community’s readiness for a capital campaign. Based on over 20 conversations, the Generous Giving Committee recommended that we wait until a new minister is settled before launching a capital campaign.

We are humbled by the love and generosity of this community and are honored to have the privilege to serve First Parish.

Generous Giving Committee

Sarah Andrysiak (Chair), Tom DeNormandie and Rosemary Lloyd

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S REPORT

LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS

Under the bylaws of the Church, the Parish Committee has the care and custody of all Church property. Pursuant to this obligation, the Parish Committee has retained the firm of Welch & Forbes to manage the long-term financial assets of the Church. These assets were transferred to Welch & Forbes at the beginning of the FY 15 fiscal year.

The longer-term investment assets of the Church are managed collectively in a “Common Fund.”

Within the Fund there are several sub-funds, whose income and principal may be restricted in their purpose and use. For instance, the Donaldson Fund must be used only for beautification or extraordinary maintenance of Parish facilities, and the Preston Fund may only be used for charitable giving. These funds are generally not available to fund the operating budget.

The Common Fund portfolio was valued at \$3.943 million as of June 30, 2020, the end of the last fiscal year, and as of April 30, 2021, had a balance of \$4.626 million. The values of the individual participating sub-funds and their stated purposes are as follow:

Fund	Purpose	June 30, 2020	Deposits or Withdrawals	April 30, 2021
Abbott	Elderly access	-		-
Bergen	Youth support	228,312.00	(11,703.69)	270,689.68
Dewey	Spiritual growth	170,120.92	(8,720.71)	201,697.57
Donaldson	Beautification	236,677.02	(12,132.50)	280,607.36
Endowment	Operating Budget	1,928,793.00	(98,873.48)	2,286,802.08
Grabill	Spiritual life	49,571.73	(2,541.14)	58,772.89
Capital Fund	Capital maintenance	150,753.54	(5,790.15)	133,918.00
Library	Library	-		-
May Market	Unrestricted	37,927.39	(1,946.65)	45,023.23
Memorial	Unrestricted	51,300.83	(2,634.62)	60,934.97
Music	Music programs	10,648.52	(545.86)	12,625.03
Preston	Charitable gifts	879,615.57	(45,090.71)	1,042,883.68
Revolving	Capital (repay)	86,037.93	(4,410.46)	102,007.69
Op. Res.	Unrestricted	39,773.32	(6,878.01)	43,238.42
Stock Pledges	Holding account	541.45	(27.23)	641.27
Sabbatical	Substitute ministers	40,213.45	(2,061.42)	47,677.58
Williams	Youth in need	32,214.94	(1,651.40)	38,194.45
	Total	3,942,501.61	(205,008.03)	4,625,713.90
	Nominal Return			22.5%

The majority of the withdrawals shown above reflect the transfer of \$200,000 to a Fidelity short-term investment account the balance of which remains available to the Parish. We have drawn significantly from our investment funds in previous years to meet operating and capital needs, but such reliance has declined over the last couple of years. Fortunately, healthy stock market returns have allowed our investment funds to grow significantly.

Several years ago, the Parish Committee mandated annually declining percentage draws from investment funds available for operations with an eventual target of 4%. For the current budget the designated draw limit was \$100,000. Because of uncertainties regarding pledge revenues and expenses when that budget was finalized (estimates of the necessary draws from investment funds required to balance the budget ranged from \$88,000 to \$117,000), the Finance Committee supported the Treasurer's request for a one-year waiver of the funds draw limitation, which was approved by last year's Annual Meeting. This year's draw limit under the Parish Committee's guideline is \$80,000, and the proposed budget (see Treasurer's Report) does not anticipate needs beyond this amount.

SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS

As noted above, in addition to our longer-term funds, we have recently reinstated a short-term investment account with Fidelity to hold funds that will be readily available should they be needed to meet unforeseen circumstances. Along with the \$200,000 in this account, the overall total of investment funds is \$4,825,713.90.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Taylor, Chris Andrysiak, Eloise Patterson and Jona Donaldson

Finance Committee

TREASURER'S REPORT

At First Parish in Lincoln, the Treasurer oversees the Operating Budget and our Endowment Funds. The Finance Committee provides expertise and guidance related to the management of the Funds.

OPERATING BUDGET: FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2021 (year ending 6/30/21)

Each year the Treasurer creates the operating budget (the budget that funds our staff, programs, and facilities maintenance) by working closely with all the FPL committees and staff to understand desired program spending and potential income. This budget is reviewed by the Parish Committee and ultimately reviewed and approved at the Annual Meeting in June. Our fiscal year ends June 30, 2021.

The FY21 budget of \$711K represented a 21% increase over FY20 actual expenditures of \$585K. This major jump was primarily for the contingent provision of additional expenses related to the assumption we would be open and doing many extra protocols related to COVID. There were also normal increases across most activities, and some new staff benefits added in.

Our funding comes from Generous Giving Pledges, other gifts, other Annually Raised Income (primarily rentals), and draws from our Endowment and Investment funds. Of course, we have been closed for all of FY21. As of the end of April, we project that for the full FY21 we will spend \$597K, which is far below budget—precisely because we have been closed—and only \$12K more than the actual expenditures for last year. Any surplus, after drawing down investment funds for operations at a 5% level, that is realized from the FY21 operating budget will be transferred to our Operating Reserve Fund.

OPERATING BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR: FISCAL YEAR (FY) 22

The Parish Committee recommends the following FY22 budget which will be presented to the Annual Meeting. It funds:

- A church that is open for live services and the full range of normal activities for the full year
- Full time Religious Education Director, and robust curriculum development, including a major new program to be prepared in FY22 and debuted in early FY23
- Full time student minister/IT person
- Continued world class music program
- Continued outreach funding focused on neighboring communities

- Year 4 of Reverend Jenny’s interim ministry
- Maintaining all employees on a full standard benefits package

To understand the budget, it will be helpful to review FY20, 21 and 22, and how thinking about the budget has evolved with the evolution of the COVID crisis. The FY20 budget, agreed to long before COVID, was \$657K, and we only spent \$585K. This underspend reflects two things: (1) Budgets almost always get underspent, as the budget process strongly discourages going over, so the process is biased towards setting a robust amount, which often gets underspent, and then the underspend gets applied to the next year; and (2) COVID shut us down in mid-March 2020, so there were a bit over three months of reduced spending.

Looking at FY21, the budget was set on the basis that we would be open the entire year, but we were closed the entire year. The budget was \$711K, and this is well above (by \$54K) the FY20 budget, and way above (by \$126K) the FY20 actual. It should be noted that the FY21 budget as approved by the congregation included authorization to draw down investment funds to balance the budget in excess of the 5% limit, based on adopted church policy—in short, the Parish voted to override the 5% limit.

Our FY21 actual expenditures are projected to come in at \$597K: (1) This is way below budget; (2) This is in line with (by \$12K) actual FY20 spend; and (3) This amount means our funds draw will be within the 5% cap. The treasurer has been made aware by persons involved in setting that cap some years ago, that getting to 5% (let alone 4% for the coming year) was considered a “stretch goal,” and church management is to be congratulated on getting there.

The total budget for FY22 is \$689K, a substantial increase from FY20 projected actual spend of \$597K, but below what was approved for FY21. Before we turn to the sources of the increases, it will be good to review the thinking behind this year’s budget. We as a church will be open for full operations. The Parish Committee has been encouraging all to think about how we return to that status, and how to regain lost momentum and build for the future. Old programs that were suspended in FY21 will be resumed, and several new programs, especially regarding the search for a new settled minister, a summertime daytime multi-day event for children, and a new program on racial justice concerns, are all in the budget.

Furthermore, the Generous Giving results were by far the best ever, with pledging up by over \$50K. So, the budget process thinking has been to celebrate reopening with little or no pruning of prospective spending. As with this past fiscal year, if the programs do not materialize, then the moneys will not be spent. Finally, because of the reaffirming pledge result, and the surplus from last year, this year’s budget will still need a funds draw down, but not above the 4% agreed upon level for this year, and the years going forward.

Turning to the major sources of the FY22 increase over the projected FY21 actual, they are:

- Compensation
 - The largest change (\$15K) comes from the kicking in of pension benefits for two employees.
 - There are four functions that were not done in FY21, or done hardly at all, and will be done in FY22: A high school group leader; a sexton on demand; books and conferences for the minister; books and conferences for the RE Director. The increase for these four is \$11K.

- The balance of the increase (\$12K) comes from the net of 1.5% pay increases for all employees, the Parish Administrator being paid for 12, instead of the 10.5 months Silvia Dieckow was with us in FY21, resulting benefits increases and few minor reductions.
- Facilities
 - We spent roughly one-quarter of the normal amount on cleaning in FY21, while closed. Spending the normal amount will raise expenses compared to FY21 by \$20K.
 - The great majority of the remaining \$5K of the difference is that for two of our three buildings, the sanctuary, and the parish house, they were hardly or not at all used in FY21, and the FY22 budget represents a return to normal operations.
- All Other: the major upward changes compared to FY21 include:
 - The new settled minister search costs: \$15K
 - The new summer program for children: \$4K
 - The new racial justice program: \$2K
 - The return of the youth group: \$2K
 - The return of “Food for Thought”: \$2K
 - The return of guest speakers sponsored by the Deacons: \$3K
 - The return of special projects by the Parish Committee: \$4K
 - And many smaller items, adding up to an additional \$6K
 - Note, all items in this bullet are the increments over whatever was spent in FY21, and not necessarily the totals to be spent for FY22.

The budget includes a 4% draw down of our investment funds, which is within the 4% cap. This draw down, coupled with the surplus from FY 21, gives us a modest projected surplus of \$16K. The budget allows for what can be thought of as an energetic and robust return to normalcy, or to the new normal.

A summary of FY20 actual and budget, FY21 actual and budget, and FY22 budget is presented below:

Respectfully submitted,

John Krzywicki, Treasurer

**FIRST PARISH IN LINCOLN OPERATING ACTIVITY:
2020 Actual, FY 2021 Projected, FY 2022 Proposed Budget**

	<i>FY20 Actual</i>	<i>FY21 Projected</i>	<i>FY21 Budget</i>	<i>FY22 Proposed</i>
INCOME				
Pledges	\$397,385	\$400,000	\$405,900	\$450,000
Non-pledged Income	\$144,097	\$125,172	\$133,184	\$127,955
Fund Contribution	\$58,468	\$120,000	\$158,468	\$127,913
TOTAL INCOME	\$599,950	\$645,172	\$697,552	\$705,868
EXPENSES				
Compensation & Benefits	\$392,835	\$403,304	\$436,822	\$441,202
Facilities & Administration				
Facilities	\$95,094	\$90,791	\$148,420	\$115,882
Office & administration	\$25,397	\$20,099	\$25,671	\$22,520
Everything Else				
Total Denominational Dues	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
Total Deacons	\$1,430	\$1,630	\$6,000	\$6,000
Total Parish Committee	\$1,086	\$1,000	\$7,500	\$20,500
Total other Committees	\$7,923	\$7,353	\$18,925	\$18,425
Religious Education (not staff)	\$6,517	\$8,006	\$15,900	\$14,500
Music (not staff)	\$3,551	\$9,085	\$7,040	\$5,640
Subtotal: Operating Expenses	\$546,833	\$554,267	\$679,278	\$657,669
Outreach Budget Funding				
Social concerns Plate Pass Through	\$21,760	\$25,992	\$15,000	\$15,000
Other Social Concerns/Outreach	\$16,297	\$17,000	\$16,750	\$17,000
Total Expenses	\$584,890	\$597,259	\$711,028	\$689,669
Surplus (Deficit)	\$15,060	\$47,913	-\$13,476	\$16,199

THE CHURCH IN ACTION

ADULT PROGRAMS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Goals of Adult Programs

- We seek to serve adults of all genders and stages (parenting, single, mid-late life, in assisted living).
- We are eager to provide programming appropriate for this time and place in our church life.
- We hope to connect with potential members from the broader community.

This past year we have been very fortunate that two new members, Deanna Laferriere and Sarah Andrysiak have joined our committee, bringing their energy and creativity to our work. We are grateful to Sarah Klockowski, who has been our invaluable organizer, PR and technical guru, and with Reverend Jenny, a talented teacher and spiritual guide. We are grateful to both Reverend Jenny and Sarah K. for their support in all our endeavors. We also wish to thank Rev. Rosemary Lloyd, Paula Waterman, Andy Clark, Barbara O'Neil, Susie Rheault, and so many others who have given of their time and talent to make this such a full and rewarding year.

Our Programs

Beginning last Fall we have been meeting the challenges of this extraordinary year with an abundance of virtual events, classes and retreats. These included activities designed to:

- invite courageous conversations
- offer learning and stimulating discussion opportunities
- foster social interaction
- develop our spiritual lives

During this period of being confined to our homes, we have addressed the particular issues of isolation, anxiety and need for human connection with programs for people in different circumstances, both within our congregation and in our community.

On a warm day in October, 2020, we took the opportunity to hold an outdoor in-person event – a Forest Bathing Walk that complied with Covid protocols for social distancing and masks, and which was enjoyed by a group of over 12 participants. As it has become a seasonal tradition, a Spring Forest Bathing Walk was held this May.

In recognition that single people and elders were especially affected by the constraints of the pandemic, we held three retreats this past year. In November Olivia Hoblitzelle, a writer, psychologist and meditation teacher, led an “Aging With Wisdom” half-day retreat attended by over 50 people that included participants from neighboring communities and several assisted living facilities. At the end of January after the holidays were past and the long winter was setting in, Sarah Klockowski and Rosemary Lloyd designed and led a well-attended “Winter Blues” retreat, and a second contemplative retreat in April on Holy Saturday.

Sarah Andrysiak's “Gathering Project” has been a bright spot in our lives for most of this long winter. Sarah brought the community together every other Monday evening on Zoom for a variety of different programs, including poetry reading, discussion of art, and facilitated

conversation. Play Readings, introduced in November, proved to be a wonderful chance to laugh and enjoy the fellowship of friends. Barbara O'Neil's writing classes have always been a favorite at FPL. In January, Barbara led the Gathering Project in an exploration of "Resilience", to help parishioners hone their skills for their Lenten Book contributions.

Sarah A. also hosts a Friday afternoon virtual "Ladies Tea" which has been another very popular program for folks looking forward every week to the companionship of friends, sharing stories and lots of laughter. The "Tea" has developed a loyal following.

To engage those who at FPL who have been wanting to increase their understanding of the Bible, Reverend Jenny, Sarah K. and Paula Waterman offered a weekly series exploring the Sacred Texts. A fall and early winter series looked at the divine feminine in the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. Another series with Sarah K. looked at The Hebrew Prophets, attracting a faithful group of parishioners.

As the Lenten season began, Sarah K. turned to the "Life of Jesus". More people joined as Sarah took us on the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, from Ash Wednesday to Easter, helping us to recognize the historic parallels to these modern times. This Spring, Sarah has continued her teachings with a weekly series "Exploring Christian Origins", as we study the Book of Acts from the time of Jesus' Resurrection. Part one of this series concluded at the end of May; Sarah intends to continue Exploring Christian Origins through the letters of Paul in the fall.

In addition to the Hebrew Prophets, Life of Jesus and Exploring Christian Origins, Sarah K. has also given a series of lectures, "God Talk", on a variety of theologies embraced by those who are marginalized or oppressed, such as Black Liberation Theology, Womanist Theology and others. Sarah intends to continue these lectures in the Fall.

The Adult Programs Committee is committed to making space for "Courageous Conversations".

On Sunday, November 8th we held a virtual "Post-Election Conversation", to encourage participants to share their thoughts and engage in deep listening with each other. Andy Clark was facilitator for this session.

Another courageous conversation, a workshop and dialogue on "How Generous Giving Reflects Our Values", was held in February, led by Rosemary Lloyd and Sarah Andrysiak.

Starting May 17th, Susie Rheault began weekly small group sessions, the "Renewal Series", for sharing of the losses of this past year and considering what our lives will be in the future.

One of our most successful programs in 2019-2020, was our monthly "Food For Thought" suppers which brought our whole community together to share a meal prepared by a band of talented FPL chefs and provided an opportunity to learn about and discuss important issues of the day. Unfortunately, we weren't able to continue FFT this year, but are looking forward to resuming this series as soon as our church is fully opened to in-person gatherings.

In addition to the events and classes that our committee has organized, there are a number of other ongoing activities for adults that have enriched our lives. These include the decade-long weekly Meditation Sangha led by Joan Kimball with technical help from Ben Wells, Ian's uplifting recorded "Music Mondays" organ concerts, Sarah Bishop's Creativity Circle, "Sip,

Talk and Learn” led by the Welcoming Committee, Chair Yoga with Melinda Bruno-Smith, Meditation Hiking with Andy Falender and Rev. Jenny, and the many and varied Small Groups.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Boynton, Chair

Adult Programs Committee: Sarah Andrysiak, Janet Boynton (Chair), Deanna Laferriere, Mary Helen Lorenz, (Chair)

CARE COMMITTEE’S REPORT

The Care Committee offers support to FPL members throughout the church calendar year, working closely with our interim minister Jenny Rankin and Sarah Klockowski. Sarah has served on the Care Committee as a liaison with Jenny and as a resource especially regarding pastoral care. When a need is brought to our attention, we call to see if our help can be used and work to determine how best that might be: just calling to check-in; preparing and delivering meals to those recovering from an illness, surgery, accident, or great loss; sending cards of support, concern, or celebration; sending birthday cards to our elders. Unfortunately, covid-19 constraints prevented pastoral singer visits or personal contact, except outside. The committee met every month and felt especially concerned about the most isolated and vulnerable in our community.

Among some of our activities and concerns during recent months:

Phone chain follow-up: We continued to work with the deacons and Rosemary Lloyd when calls disclosed special needs.

“Case load”: The committee typically has about 17 individuals or family units that we call at least monthly, including many among our “elders.” In addition, there usually are several individuals with chronic issues that we monitor, as well as 2-4 emergency care recipients who move in and out of care such as meal support.

Increasing visibility and access: to help the FPL community be aware of the support available through the committee and even more, to feel comfortable seeking such support are ongoing challenges. Many are unaware of the resources available and/or are reluctant to ask for help. We have added a notice in the Parish News and a slide at the Sunday service describing our work, emphasizing confidentiality, and providing contact information. Several members have agreed to serve as liaisons to the committee: Elizabeth Robbat Kelly and Margit alert the committee to needs among our younger families. Margit also has included information about the Care Committee in her monthly RE packets. Rosemary Lloyd has agreed to make several pastoral care “visits” (virtual or in person) when an individual’s needs exceed the ability of the Care Committee lay members.

Easter Lilies: We delivered 46 Easter lilies to some of the more isolated or bereft members, as well as to our hardworking staff.

Homecoming Tea: Hopefully health protocols may make it possible to host our now long deferred tea for FPL elders- perhaps next fall.

Small Group collaboration: The committee, in partnership with the ministers and deacons, hopes to explore ways these vital small group caring circles and the Care Committee can work together to further enhance ways to support the FPL community.

We are grateful for the opportunity to offer care and support where needs arise.

Respectfully submitted, Kim Buell and Kathy Huber (on medical leave)

Care Committee Co-Chairs

Care Committee members: Sue Cornwall, Nancy Henderson, Sarah Klockowski, Barbara Leggat, RL Smith, Susan Taylor

DEACONS' REPORT

This has been a different kind of year calling for the deacons to be and act differently. Supporting the congregation virtually during the early months of the pandemic required weekly summer services in 2020 and teaching ourselves and each other how to zoom more professionally each week. We thought a phone tree might be good to relieve some of the isolation. Or maybe hearts in peoples' gardens. We did find that Lincoln does a good job of caring for each other, so the phone tree was discontinued by the new year. And hearts weren't needed. Someone had already thought of that.

And since we weren't ushering or looking for ushers, we began to participate more in the services themselves, sharing tech support, helping to co-lead several classes, taking over announcements, sharing the covenant, readings and prayers. And we were led and taught new ways of thinking from each other and our cool and wise leaders Jenny and Sarah K.

Special services this year were fewer and required some very creative thinking. The winter solstice service, Christmas eve and the Lenten booklet had to be accomplished totally online and were all very successful. The sanctuary walk-through and Easter sunrise were joyously in person as was the stuffing and delivery of over a hundred Easter bags to members of the congregation which we happily shared with the staff and families.

Reopening has brought us new challenges as we try to envision this new world we are stepping into. Do we continue to zoom, add live streaming? How do we respond to the growing awareness of issues in the world that we must speak up about? And can we do it in ways that respect and include all points of view?

Deacons were present in biblical times, appointed by the disciples to go out and teach the lessons of Jesus. Moral and spiritual questions of today are very similar to two thousand years ago. Throughout this year of pandemic and racism there has been a sense among the deacons of needing to nourish and support the congregation and each other spiritually and morally both publicly, in teaching and one on one. We hope we can continue to lead in this way in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Waterman, Head Deacon

Deacons: Melinda Bruno-Smith, Joan Kimball, Deanna Laferriere (Chair), Tom Risser, Barbara Slayter, Paula Waterman, Ben Wells, Gus Browne, Heather Ring, Andy Clark,

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Hospitality Committee remained 100% nonfunctional during this year of COVID-19, and all funds were returned to the general budget. With gratitude for the church's good care and decision-making,

Mimsy Beckwith, Chair

MAY MARKET COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The May Market team has been on hold due to all the Covid closures. The Saturday, April 4, 2020 sale was postponed and we most likely not happen again until Spring 2022.

We did however sponsor an Antiques table at the Touch of Christmas Fair which we held in the church playground in December 2020.

Respectfully Submitted

Tucker Smith, Chair

MUSIC COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Under the direction of Ian Watson, the music program has innovated to provide music for our Sunday morning worship services despite the challenge of the choir being unable to sing together due to Covid restrictions. Hymns for each service have been recorded in the week prior to the service with Ian playing the organ in the sanctuary. The words to the hymns are presented on screen during the Zoom Sunday service, and we can sing along at home with Ian. For Christmas, Easter, and Good Friday services, choir members including professional soprano Jessica Cooper were recorded individually singing their parts prior to the service, and the voices and organ were combined in recordings for the services. The Seven Fold Amen, recorded in the same manner, concluded Zoom Sunday worship services this year. Finally, this spring, outside singing was permitted, and Jessica Cooper shared her wonderful soprano voice with us in person accompanied by Ian Watson in the Mother's Day service under the Pierce House tent. Music for Folk Music service is planned this May with recordings of individual guitar players singing. A Blue Grass Ensemble will join us for the tent service planned for June. Ian Watson has recorded eleven Music Monday classical organ pieces accompanied by conversations about the history and musical significance of the pieces he has chosen. Music Mondays are available on the First Parish website in the music section under the Worship heading. The choir hopes to resume singing together next fall. We hope to resume Live in Lincoln Center concerts in October.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Mansfield, Chair.

Music Committee: Joan Mansfield, Colleen Katsuki, Diana Smith, Tom Risser, Edie Mackie, Rhoda Taschioglou, and Ian Watson, Director of Music.

HANDBELL CHOIR'S REPORT

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 changed every aspect of all of our lives, and the handbell program at First Parish was certainly no exception. For health and safety reasons, we stopped rehearsing and playing in church in mid-March and spent the remainder of the Spring season communicating with and supporting each other over Zoom meetings so we could stay in touch and have some fellowship together.

After a summer respite, we joined together bi-weekly over Zoom once again and have continued to do so to the present. In early December, we were able to take the bells out of the closets at the Stone Church, and we began the process of creating a virtual recording. This was an immense learning curve for us- people ringing bells at home on their own with no choir to listen to, no director to direct them, and having to embrace the concepts of listening through one device while recording with another. Although this was much more challenging, we did create a recording of one of our pieces which we hope can be used in some way in a future Sunday morning service.

We eagerly await the day when we can ALL join safely together again in the same room to praise God and offer our unique form of musical expression. As a group, we are all grateful to be both healthy and resilient, and to have each other to lean on, and our appreciation of our love for what we do and who we do it with has only grown over the past 12 months. If there is a silver lining, that is it!

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Burke, Director

OUTREACH & SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Outreach Committee's chief responsibilities are to oversee FPL's donations to charity; to guide and further volunteer efforts through FPL's Faith in Action groups (FIAT'S) and service projects; and to help raise awareness of issues and events of concern to FPL members.

2020-21 was another extraordinary year for us as well as for FPL as a whole. The new COVID world has changed the priorities of our donations, how we all meet together, as well as shown how this community really steps up when the need is great.

Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas Offerings came in as a record-breaking totaling over \$25,000.

We supported Lincoln Rental Assistance to keep people in their homes, Waltham WATCH to help feed people and Health Care without walls to support homeless women in the greater Boston area.

There were 16 applicants for the Preston Grant Award, a small subset of the Outreach Committee spent the month of March conducting virtual meetings and information gathering with half of them. Once narrowed down even further, our 3 selections were sent to the PC for approvals.

The three final recipients were as follows:

- African Cultural Services of Waltham -Capital Improvement Grant to purchase a new van

- Roxbury Presbyterian Church Social Impact Center -Transformative Grant to expand Youth programs. Colleen Sharka is scheduled to come soon to speak to the Congregation about what this program is
- The Food Project -Capital Improvement Grant to purchase a new van

Several of our committee members attended the WIDE (Welcome, Inclusion, Diversity Equity) CARAT Training (Community Anti-Racist Advocates Training) it was a virtual series to explore individual biases, cultural messaged and institutional structures that hold racism in place.

Our Committee is a very busy group, we attend the COA bimonthly roundtable to stay aware of all that is happening in the town of Lincoln.

We supported and assisted with the first collaboration between St Vincent De Paul (SVDP) by hosting a Winter Clothing Drive on Feb 6th, that was a great success, as I write this there is another one in the works for the Spring at the end of this month.

We took part in the service entitled “Living Our Call to Ministry” to help bring more awareness to all that this committee supports.

We began discussions with the PC on the approval processes around the annual grants as well as the Preston in order to streamline the process and alleviate any delays.

We also began important discussions with staff on an idea of an FPL Council on Social Action in order to alleviate overlapping concerns and efforts of several FPL Committees focused on outward facing causes.

5-year Cycle (established in 2020)

Williams Bergen Fund

UU Urban Ministry - Summer camp Program	\$2000
Nature Linc Farrington	\$2000
Lincoln METCO Coordinating Program	\$1000

Other – FPL Operating Budget

Community Day Center of Waltham	\$1000
Concord Prison Outreach	\$1000
Lincoln Emergency Assistance Fund – Council on Aging (COA)	\$2000
Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc.	\$1000
Lincoln Food Pantry/St. Vincent de Paul	\$1000
Metro West Free Medical Program	\$1000
Open Table	\$1000

3-Year Cycle (established in 2020)

Williams Bergen Fund

Friends of Matenwa Learning Center (Haiti)	\$2500
South Sudanese Enrichment for Families	\$1000
Precious Project (Tanzania)	\$2500

Other – FPL Stewardship

Boston Area Gleaners	\$1000
Dignity in Asylum (Concord)	\$1000

Besides the listing here of the 3 year and 5-year cycle grants we supported the March 2021 film presentation of “I’m Not Racist, Am I?” and the community conversations, this was a collaboration of Lincoln and Sudbury groups. Most recently we supported the apple tree planting ceremony on May 9th at FPL with apple tree expert John Bunker, as a celebration of what FPL Green has helped the congregation accomplish over the last few years. This Committee is such an important part of FPL, it is very impressive the extent of Outreach that we provide to our community and neighbors afar, this was a very difficult year, and we were a beacon of light and hope to many, may we continue to be that for many years to come. Many thanks to Tom Walker from all of us on the Outreach Committee for his service and all his continuing efforts with the FPL Green Committee.

Respectfully submitted by Deanna Laferriere

on behalf of the Outreach Committee, Ralph Smith, Larry Buell, Becca Fasciano, Heather Ring, Jessica Packineau, Doug Crosby, Suzy Karl, Alice DeNormandie

RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATES REPORT

SUMMARY

The Racial Justice Advocates, emerging this year from the Anti-Racist Task Force (AR-TF) which was established early in 2019, has a mandate to work toward racial justice by Learning, Giving or Connecting, and Acting in ways that contribute to social justice and particularly anti-racism. This report identifies our activities in these three areas, with attention to chronology of summer 2020, the church year 2020-2021, and preliminary planning for summer 2021 and the coming church year.

LEARNING

Summer 2020:

- **The AR-TF continued its work throughout the summer.** The book *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates was suggested as a summer read for FPL members and the wider community. Four films were shown on zoom with discussions to follow. Other racial justice events in the area and on-line were shared through an email network of over 60 people.

Church year:

- **Books, Discussions, Films** During the 2020-2021 church year, three book discussions were held, one in September on *Between the World and Me* and two in January and February on the book *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkinson. Both were well attended and included many from other churches and Lincoln. Films proved to be a very good way to address different topics and offer discussion following. FPL’s RJA presented six additional films from September – May 2021: “Good Trouble” (twice), “Black List”, “The Talk”, “Dawnland,” and recently a

conversation between Ken Burns and Isabel Wilkinson. The Burns/Wilkinson showing attracted over 70 viewers. Many were folks from other churches, in Lincoln and from further afield.

- **Faith and Justice Coffee Hour Conversation** On Sunday, April 18, after the service, RJA collaborated with Outreach and the Green Team, sponsored by the Transition Team, to offer a coffee hour conversation on “Faith and Justice: Our Call to Ministry”. The goals were to offer the theological background for justice work, and to share information about past FPL social justice work and what other UUA and UCC churches are doing. This work reflects our covenant and call to ministry - to affirm each person’s dignity, in the spirit of Jesus. Much is being done and there is much to learn and ultimately to do.

GIVING and CONNECTING

Summer 2020:

- **Food and Clothing Drives** A children’s clothing drive provided three carloads of clothes for Solutions at Work, and another drive for a Bay Cove shelter and Early Intervention program was also very successful. Both these organization serve large populations of People of Color who are economically marginalized, and, in this case, suffering under the constraints of COVID-19.

Church year:

- Before Thanksgiving a food drive was held for Solutions at Work families.
- A winter clothing drive for Solutions at Work was organized coincident with the Christmas Fair.

ACTING

Summer 2020 and Church Year 2020-2021:

- **Black Lives Matter Banner** Last June, as the church year was closing out, the Anti-Racist Task Force (AR-TF) proposed to the Parish Committee the hanging of a Black Lives Matter banner. The banner would stand as acknowledgment of the George Floyd killing, as a reflection of our covenant “to affirm each person’s dignity” and as a reminder to our FPL community of the need to continue to learn and act on racial justice. The PC invited each committee to discuss the proposal, and report back. Discussion at all committees was open and fruitful, and support was nearly unanimous. The Parish Committee voted on June 17 to approve the banner, according to the submitted design, to hang on the sanctuary and to be followed up by discussion in the next church year. In December 2020 committees were again asked to discuss the banner, and again support was strong.
- **Voting Rights** Many FPL members participated in the “Reclaim the Vote” post card campaigns from summer into the fall, joining with other UU churches to support Our Common Ground, a non-partisan voting rights organization led by people of color. Its mission is to empower under-represented voters to fully participate in democracy.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Crosscutting all three of our objectives is a variety of community outreach that the FPL Racial Justice Advocates have undertaken.

- **Newsletter** An RJA network newsletter, thanks to Janet Boynton, has proved to be an effective way to inform and remind people of a wide array of racial justice events inside and outside Lincoln. The newsletter currently reaches over 60 individuals both within FPL and in the broader community.
- **Non-FPL Sponsored Events** Participation in events sponsored by other organizations include:
 - **METCO Film** Many FPL members participated in the showing, panel discussion and break out groups for the film “I am not a racist...am I?”. FPL Outreach provided funds to help support the film, and over 400 people participated in some way in the project that was cosponsored with Lincoln Metco and several other Lincoln and Sudbury organizations.
 - **Town Forum and WIDE** In the fall, FPL was a participant in the town forums on diversity, equity and inclusion sponsored by the selectmen. Connections were made with the other churches, the museums, town staff, and other non-profits. In a just completed program sponsored by WIDE, at least 10 members of FPL have participated in the 3 sessions of WIDE training on addressing racial justice in organizations, with 5 representing FPL and others representing other organizations.
 - **UUA Action groups** We have also become participants in two UUA Action groups, at the state and regional levels sharing info about social justice actions and education..
 - Through these activities, RJA developed relationships with many Lincoln and regional organizations addressing racial justice. By our helping promote the events of others, these groups were glad to promote and participate in FPL events. These groups include: St. Anne’s Racial Justice Allies, St. Josephs/Julie, Lincoln Library (Reading for Racial Justice), WIDE (Welcome Inclusion Diversity Equity) which is Lincoln based, and LS Core which is a student organization.

PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR SUMMER 2021

AND THE 2021-2022 CHURCH YEAR

- For the summer, we are planning a summer church read of 2 James Baldwin books: “The Fire Next Time”, and “Go Tell It On the Mountain”, with discussions and possibly a related film in the fall.
- Planning for next year is focused on initiating congregation wide racial justice learning and discussion programs, hopefully with support and participation of other church committees. Curriculum from UUA and UCC that have been used successfully by other churches are being considered.

Thank you to all at FPL who have participated in and supported these efforts to understand and work for racial justice.

Racial Justice Advocates: Janet Boynton, Mary Gaylord, Joan Kimball, Ken Hurd, Mary Helen Lorenz (Chair), Barbara Slayter, Mary Jo Veling, Ben Wells, Sarah Klockowski

TOUCH OF CHRISTMAS FAIR

On Sunday, December 6th the Parish House playground was transformed into a magical holiday fair with festive decorations and holiday delights. This year's Fair netted, after expenses, a little over \$9000 to support the church and its programs.

Dozens of generous people contributed to the success of the Fair. This year everything was different. Behind the scenes planning of logistics to safely hold the fair during the pandemic started early. Everything needed to be outside and in accordance with state and local health guidelines, not all usual activities could happen, and other areas needed to be revised. Our volunteers rose to the occasion helping us all celebrate the holiday season! The original plan of a Saturday fair had to be changed due to a nor'easter, we moved to Sunday afternoon after church and a very important church meeting. Sunday morning the playground had a coating of snow, volunteers sprang to action quickly transforming the playground to a European inspired holiday market. A separate crew rallied to decorate the Sanctuary lawn for kids' activities. During the week beautiful wreaths and centerpieces were decorated, exquisite hand-crafted items brought in, and special items donated. We sold decorated wreaths and birch log feeders on Thursday and Friday evening before the fair, selling more than any recent years. Warm thanks to all who cheerfully donated their time and energy to set-up, prepare, organize, orchestrate, staff and clean up – it truly takes a village.

Many thanks to those that chaired a specific area of the fair:

Diana Smith and Heather Ring who patiently taught helpers to create festive natural wreaths that graced the doors of Lincoln and beyond. Over 100 wreaths magically came together for Saturday. Many thanks to those that contributed fresh greens, berries, and pinecones and huge thanks to those who spent their time creating the wreaths.

Kim Buell who spent countless hours orchestrating the creation of the beautiful centerpieces that quickly sold.

Nancy Henderson for supplying holiday materials for the centerpieces including lush natural materials, and the floral bases, candles, etc.

Tucker Smith and her helpers for countless trips to Lincoln homes and the Parish House basement to find, store, organize and arrange antiques and holiday treasures for the May Market Table – many thanks to those who donated beautiful items to be sold.

Jackie Lenth and Gina Halsted who took creativity to a new level encouraging all to create unique and beautiful handcrafted items for sale. This dynamic duo start new craft projects in January in order to have a full table of homemade goodies by the following Fair – an extraordinary effort. Covid did not slow them down, they crafted even more!

Ken Hurd commonly known as Santa Claus, who made a delightful covid safe Santa visit for the children.

Sarah and Anna Bishop for providing a fabulous Fishing Tree stocked with wonderful mystery gifts for children.

Richard Nichols for providing our beautiful, live Christmas tree cut in New Hampshire shortly before the fair and displayed through the holiday season on the church lawn.

Don and Gina Halsted who managed the money the entire day of the fair, counted the cash, and helped us go high tech accepting credit cards.

Gus Browne and Jane O'Rourke our dynamic greeters for the fair who kept head count and helped all patrons follow our covid protocols.

Sarah and Chris Andrysiak, Barbara Sampson, Chris Hamilton, and Gina Halsted who enthusiastically checked out patrons from the fair quickly and efficiently allowing many people to safely enjoy the fair and support our church.

The Griffith Family for orchestrating and entertaining the children on the Sanctuary Church lawn.

Ginny Welles, Penny DeNormandie, Annie Calhoun, Alice DeNormandie, Andy Falender, Thornton Ring, Doug Crosby, Denise Bienfang, Jennie Morris, Mimsy Beckwith, and Joan Mansfield our magical elves who helped us set-up and break down seamlessly for our holiday fair.

Silvia Dieckow who quietly, effectively, and cheerfully managed innumerable tasks and calls behind the scenes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Bishop & Heather Ring, Co-Chairs

TRANSITION TEAM'S REPORT

“Identity” has been the major focus for the Transition Team this year as the Congregation worked to articulate First Parish Values, clarify our Mission, and sharpen our Vision. We began in early 2020, paused when COVID-19 reshaped our way of being together and resumed last fall.

Our objective was to create an expression of our church identity that works for a collection of individuals with differing beliefs, preferences, and opinions. To accomplish this objective we needed a flexible, iterative process and a great deal of engagement from the congregation.

And engaged you were, showing up for each event ready to reflect, share, listen and discuss. Each step and each discussion helped us tweak and refine statements designed to capture and communicate the essence of First Parish in Lincoln.

Values: We began the process by discovering and articulating a set of shared Values. Values are an expression of what we believe in, what we stand for and what is important to us as a spiritual community. They are the fundamental principles of First Parish. Understanding and accurately communicating our Values is essential to achieve a good match with ministerial candidates, to help us prioritize the use of our resources and to welcome potential new members.

In early October, the Congregation met virtually to reflect on and discuss a proposed set of four Value statements. The statements were a synthesis of themes voiced in the 2020 Values workshops and gleaned from the Spirituality Snapshot Survey, the SMR, the Vision2020 reports and other recent surveys and discernments.

In small breakout-groups and together as a congregation, participants shared a highly engaged and thoughtful discussion on the proposed statements. While many participants felt that the statements, as proposed, accurately captured the Values of First Parish, several changes were consistently suggested, helping to tune the description of what is important to us.

With a sense of our Values forming, we shifted to thinking about our future and an expression of our Vision.

Vision: A Vision statement describes what we hope to become or achieve; our aspirations for the future. The congregation had thoughtfully considered its future as part of the Vision 2020 work and had, in 2017, declared a set of Aspirations. Since four years had passed, and much had changed in our individual lives, the church and the world since that work had been done, the Transition Team asked the congregation to reaffirm those Aspirations.

After the service on December 6th, parishioners met in small groups to reflect on the aspirations identified in the Vision2020 conversations.

Again, the discussion was lively, participants were engaged, and a broad range of opinions were expressed. Participants generally hoped to see First Parish become even more diverse, inclusive, and welcoming. Many desired more social justice activism and greater local impact. Additionally, many wanted the church to be focused on the social justice aspect of environmental action as well as environmental protection. Participants wished to be more actively engaging in the wider community with our programming and wanted more emphasis on children and youth.

Mission: A Mission statement describes the purpose of First Parish. It communicates why we exist and why each of us shows up. The many discussions on FPL's Values and Vision often covered the broader topic of our Mission, providing abundant input and a strong sense of the purpose of First Parish.

Bringing it all together: Each iteration, each gathering, and each discussion helped to sharpen and hone a description of First Parish. Specific themes and messages were refined and strengthened, and the picture of First Parish became more focused. We spent time trying to capture that picture into a concise set of words or statements and invited several rounds of feedback on each of the descriptions. Eventually, we found that feedback and suggestions were more about around nuance, word choice or emphasis than substantial disagreement or differences over content. It became clear that no particular set of words will ever seem perfect to everyone, and we realized that the exact words might change slightly over time as the congregation moves forward with the Strategic Plan and the Search.

In March, the Transition Team presented a "Final for Now" statement of Values, Mission and Vision.

We consider it a living document that describes our Values, how we live those Values and the Future we are working toward. It also establishes a strong direction for the Strategic Planning work and the Search process.

Strategic Planning Process: A Strategic Planning Process provides a roadmap of sorts that will help First Parish chart out ways to fulfill our Mission and become the vibrant and impactful church that we envision. It will allow us to prioritize our resources, align us to a common plan and focus our energy on key choices. The discussions will help us gain clarity on how to move toward our envisioned future.

Additionally, many congregations use this time in an interim period to proactively review their financial health and sustainability before welcoming a new settled minister.

To encourage an informed discussion on a strategic plan, Chris Andrysiak, Gary Taylor, John Krzywicki and Peter Hussey researched the current national and local landscape of organized religion, demographic data for the Town of Lincoln, and FPL membership trends and current financial health. They evaluated our real estate and considered creative ways to more productively use these assets. They uncovered success stories of churches like First Parish, who had found creative ways to grow and thrive. This information was shared with the congregation in late March, providing important background information for the church leadership and the congregation to use when considering several strategies for our future.

During the month of May, a series of small roundtables are being offered to help parishioners better understand and weigh in on several possible paths toward our envisioned future. This aspect of the team's work will continue into the next church year.

As the 2020/2021 church year concludes, the Transition Team will be bringing its traditional work to a close. We will proactively help the Search Committee get off to a strong, informed, and productive start and will be by their side as needed during the Search Process.

It's been an incredible three years of introspection and growth. We've been honored with your trust. We've been awed by your dedication, commitment and level of engagement. We've been incredibly moved by your words, your wisdom and your honesty. Thank you.

The 2020/2021 Transition Team

Chris Andrysiak, Becca Fasciano, Gina Halsted (Chair), Chris Hamilton, Kathy Huber, Ken Hurd, Gary Taylor

The Core Values of First Parish are:	To live out our values and achieve our vision, the Mission of First Parish is:	The Vision for First Parish is:
Promoting <u>spiritual growth</u> and <u>connection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To gather for prayer and meditation, inspirational teachings, music, and ceremony, and for the celebration of nature and the divine * To build on our Unitarian and Congregational heritage by exploring, sharing, and learning from a wide variety of spiritual and faith traditions. * To grow in spirituality by encouraging our children, each other, and our faith community to seek truth, learn, and act according to high moral principles 	To be a spiritual home for individuals from diverse faith backgrounds where each person can find help and inspiration to foster personal growth on their own journey while in community with others.
Building <u>Community</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To welcome people from a wide variety of backgrounds and to find common ground in our shared humanity. * To gather, physically and virtually, in ways that help us to know, understand and respect each other. * To celebrate and grieve together as we mark the important events and transitions in our lives. * To care for each other with love and support in difficult times and circumstances. 	To be an open and inclusive community that learns to trust and work with each other as we celebrate, grieve, grow, support, and serve together.
Pursuing <u>social justice</u> and <u>human dignity</u> ; Preserving the living earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To pursue social justice by learning, understanding how and where we can make a difference, and then acting. * To seek environmental protection and justice through actions and advocacy. * To pro-actively serve and engage with our neighbors by our hands-on actions, cooperative work, and donations 	To be a source of hope and positive impact in our communities, our region and beyond by affirming the dignity of all peoples and caring for the living earth.

WELCOMING COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Our committee focused on ways to welcome and connect- visitors, FPL members and friends - online and in pandemic safe small gatherings.

Highlights of the year included:

- • "Virtual Ushers" encouraged new to FPL online visitors to join us after the service
- • Fire Pits for Five- small outdoor gatherings for members and friends
- "Sip, Talk, Learn" storytelling sessions continued online in January and March
- Membership records updated and edited for planned Member Directory debut in Fall

- Extra hands provided for the YPC May playground clean-up
- Welcoming-Rainbow Chair participants, led by Tucker and Sarah, sent Mother's Day greetings to local food pantry and FPL mothers
- Summer '21 Small Gatherings- summer version of Fire Pits for Five TBD

Co-chairs Jennie Morris and Mary Stechschulte along with Tucker Smith, Sarah Bishop, Katy Walker, Lucy Sachs, Jane O'Rourke were thankful for the opportunity to serve the FPL community this year and look forward to in person gatherings in September.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie Morris and Mary Stechschulte, Co-Chairs

Welcoming Committee Members: Sarah Bishop, Jennie Morris (Co-Chair), Jane O'Rourke, Lucy Sachs, Mary Stechschulte (Co-Chair), Tucker Smith, Katy Walker, and Annie Calhoun

YOUTH PROGRAMS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Youth Programs Committee welcomed Anna Bishop as a committee member this year. Her work with children and families as well as her history with the church has been a great addition to our Committee.

We would also like to thank our RE Director, Margit Griffith, for her extraordinary work planning and implementing programs, that complied with guidance from the Safe Congregations Task Force for social distancing, were child centered with rich themes embedded in the activities. Her creative nature coupled with her endless energy made for a successful year for our youth and their families. Nice job Margit.

Connections! Connections have been our focus this year of Covid-19 with our youth and families. With in-person meetings severely limited, and church services over Zoom, our programming has centered on how can we make connections with each other, how can families make connections with other families and with our broader community. To that end, Margit Griffith developed, with input from the YPC, monthly "Parish to Porches" kits for the children and families in our congregation. These monthly kits were themed based and chock full of activities families could do together and share. The themes were in concert with the Soul Matters curriculum First Parish purchased and used this year. By all accounts the Parish to Porches program has been a huge success, with families eagerly awaiting the hand delivery of the kit from Margit each month. Weekly Zoom church service included A Time for All Ages, where our youth engaged in meaningful ways. Fall saw the Blessing of the Backpacks as well as the Blessing of the Animals during the service. Our Christmas virtual pageant was a creative, special way to tell the Christmas story. The walk through of the sanctuary under candlelight was a highlight of the Christmas season. The QR-code Easter egg hunt included hikes throughout the conservation land.

Our sixth and seventh graders have been engaged in the Crossing Paths curriculum, learning about neighboring faiths while our eight graders are learning about human anatomy and sexuality in the OWL program. Both programs included an in-person component as guidance from the Safe Congregations Task Force allowed for and, by all accounts, were very successful. The YPC, in concert with Margit, continued to struggle with engaging our high schoolers in a program that engages them, allows them to make connections and is service oriented. We are hopeful that as Covid-19 restrictions ease, more opportunities will be available for our teens.

Participation in the youth program this year included 30 households, with 50 children receiving Parish to Porch kits each month. These kits were geared for ages Pre-K through Seventh Grade. Margit also sent out 66 postcards every week to the Pre-K through Eight Graders reaching out with inspirational quotes and fun activities to make connections with. Our sixth and seventh grade children learned about neighboring faiths in our Crossing Paths program. We had 6 youth registered for that program this year. The Eighth Grade OWL program continued to be very strong with 13 teens participating. Due to Covid, tuition was not charged this year for teens outside of the First Parish but a donation was suggested. We have received \$150 in donations so far.

Our nursery staff, Jan Carlson, continued to be compensated for the year.

The YPC planned and implemented monthly outdoor activities and social action projects for families in our congregation. It has been a busy year with pumpkin picking at Matloft farm and nature hikes in the fall, the children's area of the Christmas Fair and ice skating in the winter and working on the landscaping of the refurbished playground and pumpkin seed planting in the spring.

The First Parish playground was refurbished in the fall and transformed into an ark with a meeting gazebo that also serves as a gaga court. An additional slide was added and the swings have been updated. Families are so thankful for the outdoor space to make connections with others.

Looking forward, the YPC is looking forward to our in-person programs as Safe Congregations open up our church. We are hoping and planning for more engagement from our youth in the church service. We are hoping to grow our programming including engaging our teens in a thoughtful, service-oriented way.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Green, Chair of the Youth Programs Committee

Youth Programs Committee Members: Anna Bishop, Hannah Bureau, Terry Green (Chair), Elizabeth Robbat Kelly, Joan Mansfield, Hannah Stevenson, and Jean Welsh (Parish Committee Liaison)