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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

**Tuesday, June 4, 2019
Parish House Auditorium
7:00 p.m.**

Barbara Sampson, Moderating

The Agenda will include:

1. Invocation
— *Jenny Rankin*
2. Motion to receive 2018-2019 Annual Report
3. Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting, June 5, 2018
4. Ministerial Report
— *Jenny Rankin*
5. Parish Committee Report
— *Tim Moynihan*
6. Report of the Transition Team
— *Gina Halsted and R.L. Smith*
7. Report of the Youth Programs Committee
— *Elizabeth Robbat Kelly*
8. Report of the Pastoral Care Committee
— *Kathy Huber*
9. *Report of the Membership Committee*
— *Jennie Morris*
10. *Report of the Facilities Committee*
— *David Elmes*
11. *Report of the Adult Learning Committee*
— *Mary Helen Lorenz*
12. Report of the Outreach/Social Action Committee
— *Larry Buell*
13. *Awards*
— *Peter Pease*

14. *Generous Giving*
— *R.L. Smith*
15. Financial Report and Consideration and
action on the proposed budget for 2019-2020
— *Sarah Andrysiak, Treasurer*
16. Election of Officers, Deacons and Parish Committee Members
— *Tom DeNormandie, Nominating Committee*
17. Any other business properly brought before the meeting

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 2018

With a quorum present, Annual Meeting 2018 was called to order at 7:05p.m. by Moderator Barbara Sampson.

Invocation. Ministerial Intern Terry Cummings gave the Invocation, praying for love, patience, and understanding in these proceedings, with a common goal of strengthening and nourishing the life of our church.

Motion to Receive Annual Report 2017–2018. A **MOTION** to receive *Annual Report 2017–2018* was duly made and unanimously passed.

Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting 2017. A **MOTION** to approve the Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting was duly made and unanimously passed.

Awards. Mary Stechschulte and Janet Boynton, Co-Chairs of the Internship Committee, acknowledged this year’s Ministerial Intern, Terry Cummings, expressing gratitude for her mature presence, generous work, and exemplification of our call to “affirm each person’s dignity.” Terry was presented with a clerical stole.

Other awards were bestowed by Tim Moynihan and Manish Mishra-Marzetti:

- *Rookie of the Year Award* to Pilar Doughty, for her substantial work as Co-Chair of the Youth Programs Committee.
- *Teach Your Children Well Award* to Elizabeth Kelly and Stephen Brand, for their leadership and advocacy on YPC and in our RE programs.
- *Answering the Call Award* to Kathy Huber, for her gracious leadership of our young Care Committee.
- *Deacons Award* to Ray Shepard, for his six years’ service on the Board of Deacons and his gentle, spirit-filled leadership as Chair for the last two years.
- *God’s Ear Award* to Ruth Ann Hendrickson, for the depth and beauty of her pastoral prayers.
- *Parish Award* to Sarah Andrysiak, for her even keel, graceful leadership, and thorough competence as Parish Treasurer.
- *MVP Award* to Nick Covino, for his even-tempered leadership of our Shared Ministry Review Committee, and for his commitment on the Interim Minister Search Committee and Generous Giving Committee.
- *Lifetime Achievement Award* to Barbara Leggat, for her full measure of energy and devotion to our town, community, and church.

Ministerial Report. Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, having given notice of his departure at the end of this church year, addressed the membership with several observations, referencing his written report as well. In his three years with us, he has felt we continue to need a deepened sense of our real values—not only the aspirational ones—especially as they inform our daily work and common goals. One of those goals must surely be that we find more space in our hearts for whoever leads us next. He felt we are a talented and accomplished community that still can learn more about

working honestly and effectively together, emphasizing that the ways in which we “live into” our values must always be responsive and responsible. Offering his love and appreciation, he wished us well going forward.

In closing, he read aloud the names of the 14 beloved parishioners who died this year and whom he commends to God’s care; their names are printed in *Annual Report 2018*.

Parish Committee Report. Referencing his detailed report in *Annual Report 2018*, Chairperson Tim Moynihan highlighted four of the committee’s major initiatives that found traction this year and were navigated with thoughtfulness, effort, and demonstrable success.

Our *Shared Ministry Review*, chaired by Nick Covino, was a first-of-its-kind year-long examination of every aspect of the church and its community. It was undertaken and completed through intense and sometimes difficult processes, and in the end it rendered a depiction of our present and future church that will inform our decision-making going forward. Tim thanked Manish for his encouragement and enthusiasm for the process.

The *Generous Giving campaign*, led by R.L. Smith, essentially reversed a decade-long decline in the church’s membership numbers and related financial support—“as if by sheer will.” The committee was recognized not only for the changes in our “giving” numbers, but also for the changes in our perspective and commitment.

The *Religious Education program*, earlier marked by turnover and some turmoil, has become highly energized, with clearer direction, organization, and presence; new DRE Margit Griffith was recognized for her leadership and energetic commitment.

The new *Interim Minister Search Committee* stepped up in a matter of days, literally, and completed urgent work under near-impossible time constraints—another testament to the commitment of our lay leadership.

Finally, Tim announced that we have indeed hired in Interim Minister: the Reverend Jenny Rankin, unanimous choice of the Search Committee. Jenny was a minister at First Parish in Concord for 15 years before developing a specialty in the important work of Interim Ministry. She will join us this summer and be fully in place for the start of next church year, for a two-year term. The membership applauded spontaneously.

Shared Ministry Review Report. SMR member Chris Andrysiak thanked the congregation for participating in the SMR process, and recognized Nick Covino’s leadership and team members’ commitment. While the team’s work is complete at some level, Chris reminded that it is really a cue-up of action items to which we must be accountable by the fall, including (i) commitment and engagement within the community, (ii) top-priority engagement of new members, (iii) reconciliation of broken relationships, and (iv) reconfigurations of governance structure and communications work. After a full year’s effort and with the SMR summary report in hand, it is time to *do*.

Membership Committee Report. Katy Walker reported on the success of the committee's 75th Anniversary Jubilee, Open House, and Newcomers Dinner, but emphasized that *all* parishioners need to take part in engaging new members.

Care Committee Report. Committee member Susan Taylor spoke briefly on the committee's good work, expressing gratitude to Kathy Huber for her equanimity and grace, to Manish for his encouragement and guidance, and to Terry for her participation.

Youth Programs Committee Report. Co-Chair Elizabeth Kelly spoke to the necessity of the DRE's owning and directing the entire RE program. The program is blessed now to have Margit Griffith, who will work 35hrs a week next fall. Elizabeth especially thanked Sarah Bishop and Anna Bishop for their devotion to the program this year.

Facilities Capital Projects Committee Report. Expressing special gratitude to team member Doug Crosby and to Parish Admin Gert McDermott, David Elmes ran down the committee's accomplishments this year, including major tree trim/removal, exterior repair and painting of the Parish House, lighting upgrades, and stained-glass window repair. With Sanctuary and Stearns Room work now largely completed, we still have major projects ahead.

Outreach/Social Action Committee Report. Chairperson Larry Buell reported on a strong year with a committed team, and thanked the congregation for its operationalization. The committee supports three Faith in Action Taskforces (FIATs) and many other significant programs—and aims to instigate action along the way, including this year's massive and direct operation in northern Nigeria, led by parishioner Hauwa Ibrahim. Larry commended the committee's careful deliberation and distribution of Preston grants and other awards, and applauded the startup of the FPL Green Initiative, focusing on energy and environmental/climate work.

Financial Report and Consideration & Action on the Proposed Budget for 2018–2019. In addition to her written report, Treasurer Sarah Andrysiak gave a recap of FY2018, noting particularly the Parish Committee's (i) new "Endowment and Fund Distribution Policy," which calls for a decreasing reliance on endowment funds in support of operations over the next five years, and (ii) our new Generous Giving Committee, replacing the earlier Stewardship model. Looking toward to FY2019, Sarah reported that Parish Committee will unanimously recommend a budget of \$623,383, with permission to make further changes to the operating budget, if needed, up to \$25k. This budget figure represents a modest 4% increase from last year's budget, which will still permit investment in growth initiatives while reducing draw from Endowment and Funds. Sarah narrated a comprehensive slide deck that portrayed:

- a 10-year perspective on the operating budget;
- the proposed FY'19 balanced budget;
- anticipated growth initiatives in FY'19 (DRE [fulltime], high-school program coordinator, Children's Choir director, expanded Outreach, adult RE programming, trial "Touchstone" services, funding for future Ministerial Intern, etc.);
- report and follow-up on Generous Giving;
- report on Investment Funds as used for Outreach, capital projects, and unrestricted support.

Sarah took questions from the membership and provided deeper details and explanations as requested. A **MOTION** was made to:

- accept the proposed FY2019 operating budget of \$623,386,
- with permission to make any necessary changes to the operating budget, not to exceed \$25K, and
- with permission to make endowment-fund draws up to the allowable 7% if necessary, as part of the above-mentioned “necessary changes.” (that is, up to \$17,700).

The Motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers and Committee Members. Nominating Committee member Sarah Bishop expressed the Parish’s appreciation of the several elected Officer/Committee Members who will retire this year. The committee’s proposed slate of Officers and Elected Members for 2019 is before the membership (see *Annual Report*); a **MOTION** was made to accept the slate as proposed, and the Motion passed unanimously.

The committee’s proposed slate of Officers and Elected Members for 2019 is before the membership (see *Annual Report*); a **MOTION** was made to accept the slate as proposed, and the Motion passed unanimously.

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 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mimsy Beckwith, Clerk

MINISTRY & STAFF REPORTS

INTERIM MINISTER'S REPORT

I began a two-year contract as Interim Minister on August 14, 2019, following the departure of Senior Minister Manish Mishra-Mizretti after three years. When I arrived I found a congregation that was deeply divided over the former minister, with strong emotions of grief and anger present in different pockets, and a generally diminished sense of trust in the institution and its leadership after all that had transpired.

As an interim, my job is to help a congregation get ready to search for and welcome a new minister. The hope is that by the end of the interim period, the congregation will have a cohesive vision, robust stewardship, clear governance and organizational structure, strong attendance in all their programs (Sunday morning and beyond), as well as a sense of excitement, energy and zest about who they are and where they are going.

In addition, I fulfill the normal duties of a parish minister (collaboration with Parish Committee on strategic goals, supervising staff and programs, worship and preaching, teaching, pastoral care, rites of passage).

I will organize this Annual Report around the 5 specific tasks of interim ministry.

#1 – Heritage: Claiming and honoring the past, engaging and acknowledging its griefs and conflicts.

This goal has been the major focus of the first year, as there was considerable grief, anger, conflict and distrust present after Manish' departure.

When I arrived in August of 2018, the congregation was still trying to process the unanticipated departure of the Senior Minister. In the first weeks, I met with about 45 individuals as well as leadership groups like the Parish Committee and Deacons, hearing a wide range of thoughts and perspectives. I observed a congregation that was polarized, with some expressing deep grief and shock at Manish' departure while others reported feeling "relieved" and ready to "move on." Others located themselves "in the middle."

Some parishioners expressed anger and frustration at the "ways things had been handled" by minister, church leaders or both. Some expressed a sense of "not really knowing what was going on" or "who was making decisions." People were unclear what the governing board was doing, what individuals or factions were doing. This perceived lack of transparency and forthrightness left some feeling they could no longer trust the institution of the church or its leaders.

I was aware that there were small groups with strong points of view but they were not always aware of what other people were thinking. In the Listening Circles (January 2019), individuals had the chance to voice their own perspective on Manish and the last three years, but also to hear from others who had sometimes nearly diametrically opposed experiences. This seemed to help in the process of healing and reconciliation.

When the YouTube video by Manish surfaced and was circulated widely in church and town in late January, some of the original polarization re-emerged and tensions ran high. We brought in Rev. Parisa Parsa, Essential Partners, to lead a forum in early February; 100 people attended. Again, reaction was almost evenly divided with some empathizing with Manish' perspective on the town and feeling sad; others feeling angry and betrayed by his depiction of the community.

#2 - Mission and Identity: Recognizing and naming its unique identity as well as its strengths, needs and challenges.

This task was already jump-started by the Shared Ministry Review which had been done in 2018. The community spent a lot of time reviewing itself and naming strengths and weaknesses.

Therefore, the task lay more in the implementation and we made progress on that though there is more to do. The Parish Committee appointed a Personnel Committee and a Governance Task Force (two SMR recommendations). The Transition Team brought in an outside consulting group, Essential Partners, to train lay facilitators to lead dialogues on "difficult issues" in order to make communication healthier and more "out in the open" not in small private groups. In addition, an Adult Programs committee was formed.

Implementing the SMR recommendations will be a major focus for the Parish Committee in 2019-2020, and I will collaborate with them on that. I am pulling together the chairs from Deacons, Transition Team and PC to see how we can align our work in 2019-2020 so there is no duplication but synergy and collaboration between the leadership groups.

There is still a lot of work to be done by the congregation before they can clearly articulate their identity, mission and vision and write it down on the profile for the search committee. This will be a major focus for Fall 2019.

#3 – Leadership: Who makes what decisions? Are roles and responsibilities of minister/board/deacons clear? Are lines of accountability, power and authority clear? Who does what? Who decides what? How do you invite in new leaders/changing of the guard.

The Shared Ministry Review identified governance as a critical issue. The exit interviews by Manish and PC affirmed that ambiguity over "who does what" and who has "power and authority" in what area were part of the problem in Manish' ministry. There was misunderstanding over the role of the minister, the scope of the minister's power and authority regarding strategic decisions as well as worship, programs and finance. It will be important to gain more clarity before a new minister starts.

To this end, there is a Governance Task force now at work, planning to report out by January 2020. This will enable the Parish Committee to write a job description for the new minister that clearly sets out what the minister will be held responsible for and how evaluation will be done.

There seems to be tension and confusion regarding the relationship between the Minister and the Parish Committee. Some parishioners think the minister "reports to" the Parish Committee; others

say they expect more of a collaborative relationship but it remains unclear where power and authority lie and how it is navigated between these two entities.

In collaboration with the Transition Team, I designed and led a Leadership Retreat for 30 congregational leaders on January 26, 2019 at the First Parish in Weston. We asked for their wisdom and input what three core issues needed to be addressed in the interim. The Transition Team collated notes and reported back to the Leadership Retreat participants.

Navigating shifts in leadership/changing of the guard:

Right now, there is no clear process for how future leaders are identified, invited, mentored or equipped for success. This is something that the Parish Committee will need to think about in the years to come as the “pipeline” for future leaders is unclear. Because there is no clear process, newer parishioners may feel unsure or “not invited” into the inner circle. Long-time parishioners know how to navigate the system, but newer people may be mystified by how things really work or how you get “invited in.”

There could be many parishioners with gifts and talents who would be eager to be “invited into ministry” who are currently not engaged. There could well be considerable additional energy and talent that has not yet been harnessed or “liberated.”

#4 – Linkage: the ways in which we renew and deepen connections to our faith and denomination.

Currently, there is not much connection between the First Parish in Lincoln and the two outside faith traditions, UCC and UU, other than paying the annual dues (or a portion of them). I would say that parishioners seem somewhat ambivalent about how much connection they want. It seems like their experience of “getting help” from the UCC and the UUA during the difficult events surrounding Manish’ departure was mixed at best.

That said, parishioners have been willing to attend 3-4 events and webinars offered by the UUA and UCC this past year, including workshops on covenant and social media.

I will continue to direct leadership towards the various books, conferences and resources offered by the two denominations. I also plan to do more preaching on “roots” and “spiritual ancestors.”

This goal will be a major focus of Year 2 as the congregation considers its spiritual identity and theology; does it gravitate more to one faith tradition or another? Does it want to remain independent or look to outside resources for help?

#5 – Vitality: How to support the congregation in renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new professional leadership, and engaging its future with anticipation and zest.

This will be a big focus in year 2 as the congregation tries to articulate a common vision. There will be continued work on trying to revitalize the community as a whole (worship and RE attendance, non-Sunday morning programs to bring people in, community-building events to

increase sense of cohesion and celebration and fun, stronger stewardship as a result of increased engagement).

In addition to this “intentional interim work,” I supervised staff, taught a class during Lent, preached and led worship, met regularly with the Parish Committee, Deacons and Transition Team, consulted with other committee chairs as best I could (YPC, Membership, Care, Outreach), did some direct pastoral care. We tracked attendance at worship and RE throughout the year and that data is available for the congregation.

I officiated at memorial services for Jack French, Jane Langton, Bill Munroe, David Andrysiak, Foster Fargo, Martha Grabill and Harold Smith. I baptized one baby, Chloe Caitlin Hogue.

Conclusion

In summary, I see a congregation that is still trying to make the transition from one long-tenured stable ministry with Roger Paine to the next “chapter” in its communal life. The internal struggles and divisions of the last few years have weakened the community’s sense of coherence, its vision for the future, and a basic sense of trust. There is a sense that the church is less relevant in the town than it has been in the past. There is a sense that the community is made up of many strong individuals who enjoy each other greatly, but that there is no “common vision” or “shared purpose.” Because people were deeply divided over Manish and didn’t know how to handle that, a lot of the communication had gone “underground” with small groups forming and speaking privately with one another. My first effort was to get these issues out into the open so the community could name and reckon with what is there. We made a start on that.

I have greatly enjoyed my first year with the community at the First Parish in Lincoln. I am grateful to work with two energetic, creative staff in Gert and Margit; you are lucky! I thank Tim Moynihan for his collaboration and partnership as head of the Parish Committee this year. And I am deeply grateful to the Transition Team who show up in my office two times a month for a two hour meeting and give hours and hours beyond that. They are a wise and hardworking group on your behalf.

Thank you, the congregation, for your presence and participation in this rebuilding effort. I appreciate your direct feedback to me and other lay leaders when there is an issue on your mind. I look forward to serving you in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
The Reverend Jenny Rankin, Interim Minister

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION’S REPORT

The theme of this year’s annual report is “Again!”

We welcomed just a few new children, but many more returning children attended more consistently. They’re saying “again!” instead of “ag-aaain?!” to coming to church on Sundays. This is a definite improvement over prior years. Our goal was to put the fun in the FUNdamentals of religious education, and we’re well on our way.

The statistics from the UUA's May 2019 "Tidings" are challenging to read...

Welcome to the second email in a new series of UUA thought leadership messages sent monthly to all UU congregations and leaders to strengthen our connections and support shared learning. Enjoy!

Dear Congregation Members,

The UUA's annual congregational certification is in! Every year, congregations report their membership, religious education (RE) enrollment, budgetary figures, and much more. It's a helpful snapshot of what's happening in our congregations. And here's this year's headline: membership is steady, while religious education enrollment and average Sunday attendance continue to fall. (it goes on...)

(I like the "Enjoy!" at the end of the greeting!?) So I guess the good news is, we're not alone. And the bad news is, we're not alone. I'm hoping we can prove them wrong. I think families are coming to realize the importance of balance. Again.

Our tried and true curriculum was presented again. We tidied up existing curriculum including: Spirit Play kits - many are back in shape and lovely once more with others being cared for over the summer. Sacred Stories lesson plans now feature connections to Harry Potter themes which the children really enjoyed. Neighboring Faiths lessons now include closer looks at our UUA and UCC roots and the students insisted in adding a community service piece. Yeah, we'll do *that* again! These all needed substantial work to make accessible to teachers and students alike. Our Spirit Players curriculum for 2nd/3rd graders continues to be a hit.

Our annual events like Advent Workshop, the Lucia Day procession, the Pageant, Winter Workshops were well attended and enjoyed again.

People are saying "again!" to new programs and events. Our Spring Workshop was very well received. As were our Parent Dinner, the Christmas Pageant being held in the Sanctuary, the Bell Choir offering a Winter Workshop, the children joining the adults for a Communion service (so meaningful!). More new programs and events will be introduced next church year...

Our Intergenerational services were a hit again. These include the Pageant, Christmas Eve 5 p.m. service, March 10th (Lent/Wondering in Wilderness) and our final Celebration Sunday is in planning as of the writing of this report (time will out). The Time for All Ages have been a joy to create and share with the children and with the congregation.

If you take a close look at the RE calendar, you'll notice some very intentional ways of worship and learning for the children - in the spring and fall, there were seven or eight weeks of "regular" religious education divided by age/grade; when kids are in grade specific classes. There were also 12 opportunities for all grades to be involved in an activity together. New this year, we intentionally offered six Sundays the children would just participate in usual worship in Sanctuary - including, for the first time ever, a Communion Sunday. There were 3 non-holiday intergenerational services. This variety was very successful and "checked a lot of boxes" in what families are looking for and what is developmentally appropriate for children. We will do that again in 2019-2020!

All this takes volunteers. Thank you to all teachers and volunteers. Again and again, thank you!

We also updated our Safe Church Policy and did a little room configuration (new door) to enable us to hire youth as classroom assistants. We want them back again!

The professional development opportunities I enjoyed and continued meetings with local UUA and UCC DREs have been incredibly valuable. There seems to be a focus on “family worship” throughout. One of my goals this summer is to synthesize what I’ve learned so I may share the information with the FPL community. Anything worth hearing, is worth hearing again.

With other elements humming along nicely, next year, the focus will be on creating a solid and meaningful program for our teenagers. It's time FPL has a Youth Group again!

(If you say the word “again” over and over again, it starts to sound ridiculous.)

It has been a pleasure to serve this community again this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Margit Griffith, Religious Education Director

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Facilities

Over the summer, with the departure of the Mishra-Marzetti family, we executed a three-day turn-around on the parsonage. Thanks to the help of our maintenance contractor, Mark Forsythe of New England Church Keepers, the house was cleaned and small repairs were made (just barely) in time for the new tenants to move in. This summer we will see another turn-around, but with more time between tenants so that Mark and I can better coordinate any work needed. We also saw the turnover of the Parish House lower level with the departure of Birches School in July. During this time, I worked with Tim Moynihan and the Magic Garden board members, staff members, architect, and contractor to finalize the lease, and then attend subsequent meetings to review Magic Garden’s modifications to both the classroom areas and the playground needed to meet their licensing requirements.

While the Facilities Committee did not meet on any regular schedule, we had our list of projects and approved budgets. And while we did not get to everything planned for the current fiscal year, we were finally able to move forward with our plan to install a new high efficiency boiler which will better serve the office wing and result in substantial savings in both gas and electricity use. The final piece will be to have the contractor back to swap out thermostats wherever possible with Wi-Fi enabled units so that usage of space can be better aligned with the heating schedule. While Wi-Fi thermostats were included in the Stearns Room building project, the scope of work did not include bringing in Wi-Fi service, so that task is on the Facilities Committee’s list for the coming year.

The church was also able to maintain a fairly small, but steady number of ongoing and short-term tenants who pay a nominal amount to use church space and resources. One of the greatest challenges around space usage is the management and oversight of park availability given that the church own's the only significant off-street parking in in the immediate area of Lincoln Center. Balancing the needs of the church, the Council on Aging, and the town's Bemis Hall Rental program takes and growing amount of time and finesse, and the increase in church programming this past year has required a greater level of regular negotiation with the town's Bemis Hall rental coordinator.

Financial

We have continued our working relationship with Steeple Accounting owner, Mary Lou Turnbull. Between Sarah Andrysiak, Treasurer, Mary Lou, and myself, we have a strong system in place for handling the church's financial operations including payables, receivables, payroll, tax filings, budget management, account reconciliation, and financial reporting to the Parish Committee. Over the coming months, Sarah and I will be working with our soon to be elected new treasurer, John Kryzwicki, who will be taking Sarah's place on the church's finance team.

This year I also provided support for the Generous Giving Committee's two campaigns for operations – Ark and Annual – as well as a separate fundraising initiative approved by the PC to raise money for the installation of solar panels on the office wing roof.

Human Resources

This year set up personnel files and records for several new staff members -- Interim Minister Jenny Rankin, and a host of new Nursery Assistants and Class Room Assistants for the RE program, as well as CORI screening all our adult RE volunteers.

We also said goodbye to Kathy Harvey-Ellis, Communications Coordination/Membership Committee Liaison, and Mike Richards, Sexton. Kathy left for a job with more hours and a standard schedule that would allow her to be home after school. Mike, a professional locksmith, took a full-time job with a security system company in Boston which made it impossible for him to commit to his part-time hours at FPL.

The newly appointed Personnel Committee continues to work with the Membership Committee and Jenny to redefine the Communications and Membership roles. And to fill the void in facilities cleaning and snow removal, a cleaning company has been hired to focus 100% of their energy on keeping our spaces clean and ready for use, and a local landscaping contractor has been brought on to ensure all our entrances and pathways are safe and accessible following winter storms.

Governance and Staffing

Like many other organizations, a church goes through cycles of birth, growth, stability, decline, and, if the members have laid a strong enough foundation, re-birth. When I accepted this position with FPL back in 1997, the church was just rising out of a decline, and was well on the path to re-birth and growth with their new minister. Since then the church has passed through the phases of growth, stability decline and is now on a journey towards a re-birth as they work to define who they are, who they want to be, and what they want in their next minister.

The Shared Ministry Review (SMR) conducted last year was a first major step on that journey. It defined the areas where work is needed in order to shift into a phase of growth. Another important step was hiring an experienced interim minister and committing to a full two year interim period (since expanded to three) in order have time to complete the work needed before going in search of the next settled minister.

One of the key items the SMR raised up was the fact that FPL has no established governance model. The church's by-laws are very broad and general, policies are few and, in many areas non-existent, and roles of lay-leaders and staff, and how they interact and work with each other within the organization are largely undefined. Given the lack of an organizational chart or Executive Director/CEO, and without policies and procedures in place, the church's lay-led groups and committees, out of necessity, become autonomous entities. With the recent appointment of a Governance Task Force, the church has taken another important step towards re-unifying all the various committees and interest groups into a cohesive organization.

As part of their work, the Governance Task Force will need to address the roles and responsibilities of paid staff versus volunteers within the greater organization. I think they will find that given the complexities of the ever increasing legal and regulatory requirements all business and organizations must comply with, there are more responsibilities that are better shifted to paid staff. The challenge will be that in order to shift responsibilities to paid staff, the church will need the staffing capacity to take them on.

Over recent years the church has invested heavily in staffing in most areas with an eye towards growth. Staffing and labor needs in the areas of Music, Worship, RE, Facilities, Communication have been assessed, needs identified, and resources invested to increase compensations and benefits as needed. When a search for a settle minister was done after Roger Paine's retirement, it became clear that the church had not kept up with compensation and benefit levels for Senior/Sole Ministers and a greater investment was needed to attract and maintain the caliber of minister the church desired. Currently the church is re-assessing Communication and Member Development and has carved out a greater level of funding in next year's budget for expanding staffing in those areas.

The one area that has not yet been assessed is Administration. There has been no increase in staffing hours dedicated to Administrative functions in over two decades, yet the level of responsibilities to keep an organization running both efficiently and legally has steadily grown.

In 2013, as part of my annual review with the Personnel Committee, I raised my concerns around the lack of adequate administrative staffing and the challenges it was creating for lay leadership, co-workers, church members, and the overall organization. I had asked that the church consider adding at least a quarter-time administrative support position. Doing so would relieve me of the tasks that did not require a higher level of skill, freeing some of my hours to better manage necessary operational, financial, and facilities management tasks that had already begun organically migrating to me from volunteer committees. I knew it would be a financial stretch given staffing investments that had already begun in other areas as stated above, but I also knew that the growing number of responsibilities had already far outweighed the 35 hours per week allotted to administrative functions during the ten-month active church year. Given the challenges the church was facing at the time—declining membership, decreased giving, the looming

construction project, a search for a new minister—the decision was that my proposal would need to be shelved.

However, a recent meeting with PC leadership and the Facilities Committee has already started heading down the path of shifting elements of facilities management and operational oversight from the committee to a staff position. The newly appointed Personnel Committee has been charged with simply overseeing personnel matters, but the work needed to satisfy legal employment requirements must still rest with a staff member. The PC leadership has also been discussing shifting operational matters off their agenda so they can focus on the more visioning and strategic planning, and again the plan seems to be to shift most tasks to a staff member. The work of the Governance Task force may determine that are other areas where these types of shifts are needed.

While the church is still facing the same challenges that they were in 2013, I have re-opened the conversation with the Personnel Committee, and look forward to deeper conversations with Jenny, my supervisor, the Governance Task Force, and the Parish Committee around how my position can best serve FPL going forward, and what resources will be needed to bring about any identified changes in roles and responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted,
Gert McDermott, 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 5, 2018.

New Members

May 19, 2019

Heather Ring
Thornton Ring

Necrology (M = Member)**Date of Death**

(M)	John (Jack) French	November 21, 2018
(M)	Timothy Aarset	December 8, 2018
(M)	Jane Langton	December 22, 2018
(M)	Martha Grabill	January 13, 2019
	Theodore Dreier	February 4, 2019
	David Andrysiak	March 13, 2019
	Peggy Elliott	April 12, 2019
(M)	Foster Fargo	April 14, 2019
	William Munroe	April 22, 2019
	Harold (Hal) Smith	April 23, 2019

Baptisms and Dedications

Chloe Caitlin Hogue

December 15, 2018

Ended or Transferred Memberships 9**Membership Count** as of May 31, 2019

Active Members: 303
Inactive Members: 34
Total Members: 337

Active Friends: 43
Sunday School Registration: 42
Our Whole Lives Registration: 23
High School Program Participants: 5

ADMINISTRATION, PROPERTY, AND FINANCE

PARISH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Parish Committee, like the rest of the Church, was tasked with a twofold mission during 2018 and 2019. We spent part of our time looking back to examine our previous ministry and part of our time looking forward to begin positioning ourselves for the upcoming search for a new minister. As we looked back we:

- Held retreats for Church leaders during which they could respectfully discuss their thoughts and feelings about FPL and to devise programs for the entire Church to participate in this healing process;
- Invited guest speakers from both denominations and outside the Church to present on difficult subjects like race, class, and the role of religion in these conversations; and,
- Participated in Church wide forums where members were able to discuss and react to departures and upsetting videos.

We also looked to the future and began to move away from “what had happened” and toward “what is possible.” In this effort we:

- Established a Governance Task Force (thank you Dwight for persisting!) to take a deep look at how we organize and run ourselves and how our practices compare to other churches that are similar to ours;
- Empowered a great Transition Team that is leading us through this twofold process and making sure that we take a considered approach in our preparations for the minister search; and,
- Extended the transition period and (more importantly) Jenny’s time with us for an additional year so that it is clear that we have both the time and the expertise we need to move into our next phase as a Church.

It is important to note that these efforts were not disparate, but complimentary. Simply put, we needed to understand our past in order to better prepare for our future. We needed time to process, heal, and innovate before making our next call to ministry.

As I complete my term as Chair, I feel strongly that the time has come to truly move forward. We will never fully complete our analysis of what occurred during the past few years, but the opportunity to build and strengthen our community is real and we need to start directing our energy toward the future.

At our final meeting of the year, Sarah Andrysiak finished her financial report with a simple admonishment for the PC going forward, she told us we should start having fun! I could not agree with this more, if we cannot have fun and enjoy the time we spend attending and stewarding FPL, what is the point? As move ahead let’s keep this in mind.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Moynihan, Chair

Parish Committee: Chris Andrysiak, Nick Covinio, Becca Fasciano, Dwight Gertz, Mary Helen Lorenz, Carrie Marotta, Tim Moynihan (chair), R.L. Smith, Jean Welsh

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Personnel Committee was reestablished in December 2018. The members of the new committee are Gus Browne, Carrie Marotta, Jane O'Rourke and Ralph Smith. The committee's first task involved reviewing all of the personnel policies which had not been updated for several years.

The committee members proceeded to update the job descriptions and performance review policies and procedures. Committee members met with staff to review their responsibilities and listen to any concerns they had regarding their positions. The committee also functioned as a resource to staff and other church committees when a personnel related question was raised.

As we look forward to next year the first project to be addressed involves updating the Personnel Policy Handbook. We are also assisting on the search committee for a Membership and Communications Coordinator.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph O. Smith, Chair

Personnel Committee Members: Gus Browne, Carrie Marotta, Jane O'Rourke, and Ralph 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 2019.

<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	Peter Watkinson

The Nominating Committee expresses our congregation's warm appreciation to Sarah Andrysiak for her three years of service as our Treasurer.

Board of Deacons (10 members)

Member	3 years	Gus Browne
Member	3 years	Heather Ring
Member	3 years	Tom Risser
Member	1 year	Andrew Clark
Chairperson	1 year	Deanna Leferriere

The Nominating Committee expresses appreciation on behalf of our congregation to Tom Haslett for his three years of service as a Deacon and to Mary Gaylord for her two years of service. We express deep appreciation, in memoriam, for the warm and thoughtful contributions of Deacon Tim Aarset during his three years of service.

In addition to the new and reappointed member Deacons mention above, Melinda Bruno-Smith, Joan Kimball, Barbara Slayter, Paula Waterman, and Ben Wells will continue to serve in their terms as Deacons in the coming year.

Parish Committee (9 members)

Member	3 years	Priscilla Damon
Member	3 years	Dwight Gertz
Member	3 years	Karin Levy
Chairperson	1 year	Nick Covino

The Nominating Committee expresses appreciation on behalf of our congregation to Mary Helen Lorenz and to Becca Fasciano for their years of service on the Parish Committee. We extend a special thanks to Tim Moynihan for his two years of service as Chairman of the Parish Committee.

In addition to the Parish Committee members nominated above, Chris Andrysiak, Carrie Marotta, Tim Moynihan, R.L. Smith, and Jeani Welsh will continue to serve in their terms on the Parish Committee in the coming year.

Nominating Committee (5 members)

Member	1 year	Tom DeNormandie
Member	1 year	Alexis Jette
Member	1 year	Sylvia Perry
Member	1 year	Barbara Sampson
Member	1 year	Ray Shepard

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee:

Tom DeNormandie, Alexis Jette, Sylvia Perry, Barbara Sampson (chair), and Ray Shepard

FACILITIES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The committee tends to split work between completing projects and determining future needs and priorities. A lot of the work has been focused on the Parish House. We cut down many dead (primarily ash) trees between the Parish House parking lot and the Flint property to the south. We also repaired a grate in the parking lot that had caved in. The stained glass in the Window Room of the Parish House was repaired. After consulting with the Green Energy Committee, we proceeded with our original plan to upgrade the boiler which supplies heat for the office wing and at the same time eliminated two electric water heaters.

We participated in the review of the solar panel installation and have a member serving as Facilities Committee liaison for the project.

For next year, we recommend re-roofing the original front portion of the Parish House, which will be expensive, but necessary to prevent water damage. We also plan to upgrade the Parish House bathrooms and auditorium lighting with more efficient fixtures. We will be working with the Parish Committee and an appointed task force on a plan for addressing the necessary playground repairs. Other projects being considered include tighter and more efficient windows in the office wing; providing a short-term solution for air conditioning in the offices that will be occupied during periods of hot weather; updating doors off the office hallway to include windows, bringing us in-line with Safe Church guidelines; and installing Wi-Fi in the Church building.

Respectfully submitted,
David Elmes, Chair

Facilities Committee Members: Doug Crosby, David Elmes (chair), Ed Kern, Peter Sugar, and Gert McDermott (ex-officio, Parish Administrator)

GENEROUS GIVING COMMITTEE REPORT

The “Generous Giving Team” is just wrapping up its second year as a committee.

The team currently has but four members who have worked incredibly hard to plan and execute this year’s fundraising effort.

On the heels of last fall’s 75/75 giving campaign that raised \$77,000 to jump-start the annual giving process, the Generous Giving Team decided to institute another fall campaign this year, “The Ark Campaign” that raised a hefty and generous \$30,000, but, not unexpectedly, nowhere near the \$77,000 from the prior fall’s 75/75 campaign.

As of the writing of this report (May 15, 2019), we have received pledges for the spring campaign totaling just over \$340,000. Combined with the \$30,000 fall campaign, the \$370,000 is a strong number as far as total annual pledging has gone, yet it is a good bit less than the \$460,000 contained in the first pass of the budget that we were shooting for. Fifty percent of all pledges are below the suggested \$2,000 per household. The congregation needs to talk about its financial relationship with the church and the Generous Giving Team will help lead this conversation.

The Future:

The church needs a well thought out, well-articulated, and well executed long term, systematic Giving Plan. Next year’s team will work hard on developing and starting to implement such a plan. The Team itself needs to be much bigger as well...four is just too small a number for all that needs to be done.

Additionally, although some background work was done this year, we still need to begin serious work on Planned Giving and Bequests to the church by members and friends of the church.

I will be stepping down as Chair of Generous Giving at the end of this church year in June. I have been in touch with the Parish Committee about the importance of having them quickly name a new, reconstituted Generous Giving Team with a new Chair.

In closing, Nick, Gary, Joe and myself want to deeply thank the First Parish community for giving so generously. Our needs are large, the challenge big, our size is limited...yet we will find a way to stay vibrant and thriving as a church.

Respectfully submitted,
R.L. Smith, Chair

Generous Giving Committee: Nick Covino, Joe Robbatt, R.L. Smith (chair), and Gary Taylor

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.

The Common Fund portfolio was valued at \$3.65 million as of June 30, 2018 and, as of April 30, 2019 had a balance of \$4.012 million. The values of the individual participating trust sub-funds and their stated purposes are as follow:

Fund	Purpose	June 30, 2018	Deposits or Withdrawals	April 30, 2019	
Abbott	Elderly access	-	-	-	
Bergen	Youth support	207,193.36	-	232,055.12	
Dewey	Spiritual growth	149,333.43	-	167,252.40	
Donaldson	Beautification	195,518.20	-	218,979.03	
Endowment	Operating Budget	1,626,980.83	-	1,822,207.21	
Grabill	Spiritual life	40,951.06	-	45,864.91	
Capital Fund	Capital maintenance	275,645.87	(57,699.85)	246,106.51	
Library	Library	0.01	-	0.01	
May Market	Unrestricted	27,390.80	3,925.52	34,859.43	
Memorial	Unrestricted	41,003.23	1,000.00	46,987.96	
Music	Music programs	6,814.75	2,000.00	9,852.26	
Preston	Charitable gifts	841,861.89	(20,000.00)	921,134.23	
Revolving	Capital (repay)	71,075.68	-	79,604.27	
Op. Res.	Unrestricted	101,384.81	-	113,550.28	
Stock Pledges	Holding account	270.21	-	302.64	
Sabbatical	Substitute ministers	33,220.21	-	37,206.41	
Williams	Youth in need	32,247.23	-	36,116.68	
	Total	3,650,891.57	(70,774.33)	4,012,079.35	
				4,082,853.68	
	Nominal Return			11.8%	

We have drawn heavily from our investment funds over the last two years. Much of the nearly \$500,000 in fund use was due to the Stearns Room and Sanctuary renovations. The Abbott and Donaldson Funds were tapped respectively for elderly access features and landscaping for the project. The Capital and Memorial Funds helped cover construction costs. Significant contributions also came from May Market proceeds and the Music Fund. Fortunately, we have been blessed with very healthy investment returns, and our current balance is higher than it has been at any time since we switched to professional fund management by Welch & Forbes in June of 2014.

Two years ago the Parish Committee mandated declining draws from eligible investment funds with an eventual target of 4%. For next year's budget the designated draw limit is 6%, and it appears that with the Treasurer's proposed budget, we shall be able to stay within that limit.

SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS

In the recent past the Church, in addition to its longer-term funds, also had a Fidelity investment account maintained for contributions to the Capital Campaign dedicated to the Stearns Room and Sanctuary renovations. These funds were expended along with other funds noted above to complete the two projects, and the account now has a zero balance.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Taylor, Chair

Finance Committee: Chris Andrysiak, Joe Robbat, Gary Taylor (chair)

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) 2019 (year ending 6/30/19)

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, 2019. The FY 2019 budget of \$625,706 represented a 9% increase over FY 2018 actuals and reflected investment in Adult and Youth RE, a set aside for future student ministers, and continued strong programming in music and outreach. Our funding comes from Generous Giving Pledges, other gifts, Other Annually Raised Income (primarily rentals), and draws from our Endowment and Investment funds. As of the end of April, we are ahead of budget. Any surplus that is realized from the FY 2019 operating budget will be transferred to our Operating Reserve Fund.

OPERATING BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR: FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020

The Parish Committee unanimously recommends the following FY 2020 budget which will be presented to the Annual Meeting. It funds:

- Full time Religious Education Director; robust teacher training and curriculum development
- Adult Religious Education Programming
- Part Time Community Engagement and Communications Staff (new, expanded and revised from Communications position)
- High School Program Leader (new) and Children's Choir Director
- Continued world class music program
- Training and speakers for the implementation of SMR recommendations
- Continued outreach funding focused on neighboring communities
- Part time Student Minister
- Year 2 of Reverend Jenny's interim ministry

The total budget for FY 2020 is \$621,094, a modest decrease from FY 2019. Thanks to the generosity of our community and the work of the Generous Giving Team, we have raised \$384,000 in pledges. Our "Endowment and Fund Distribution Policy" which defines the maximum percent of our funds that can be drawn to support operations allows a draw of \$121,240 from our funds. (This is 6% of average fund balance over the previous five years; the allowable draw drops to 4% in FY 2022.) There is a gap of \$22,008 between our budgeted expenses and our revenue sources. The Parish Committee recommends that we cover this gap by drawing on our operating reserves. Please note that the FY 2020 budget, like FY 2019, differs from most recent years. Historically, part of the Senior Minister's compensation has been in the form of parsonage occupancy. Because Reverend Jenny has opted not to live in the parsonage, the full compensation value is a compensation expense. This is offset by rental income (which appears in "other annually raised income" in the chart below).

**FIRST PARISH IN LINCOLN OPERATING ACTIVITY:
2018 Actual, FY 2019 Budget, FY 2020 Proposed Budget**

	2018 Actual	2019 Budget Approved	2020 Proposed	% of 2019 Total
INCOME				
Pledges and other Gifts	352,071	415,894	396,000	64%
Other Annually Raised Income	82,250	101,379	103,854	17%
Endowment & Fund Contribution	195,538	108,433	121,240	20%
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 629,859	\$ 625,706	\$ 621,094	100%
EXPENSES				
Compensation and Benefits	403,466	405,876	396,677	62%
Facilities and Admin				
Insurance	27,784	29,000	29,000	5%
Facilities Contract	12,049	17,200	18,300	3%
Other Facilities	41,061	47,225	75,950	12%
Total Office & Administration	21,940	23,410	29,060	5%
Everything Else				
Total Denominational Dues	11,726	13,000	13,000	2%
Total Deacons	4,946	14,530	7,050	1%
Total Parish Committee	766	15,500	12,000	2%
Total Other Committees	8,055	11,200	11,200	2%
Religious Education (not staff)	2,788	15,675	16,125	3%
Total Music (not staff)	5,175	5,840	6,240	1%
Subtotal: Operating Expenses	\$ 539,756	\$ 598,456	\$ 614,602	96%
Outreach Budget Funding				
Social Concerns Plate Pass through	15,019	12,000	12,000	2%
Other Social Concerns/Outreach	17,099	15,250	16,500	3%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 571,874	\$ 625,706	\$ 643,102	100%
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 57,985	\$ (0)	\$ (22,008)	
Transfer to/From Operating Reserves	57,985	(0)	(22,008)	
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) Net of Op Res.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Note that any additional pledges or gifts received will reduce the withdrawal from Operating Reserves.

ENDOWMENT AND INVESTMENT FUNDS FPL is fortunate to have Endowment and Investment Funds of over \$3.5 M. Some of these funds are restricted in use (for capital projects or for outreach). In most years, we draw from our Funds to support our operating budget, fund significant capital projects, and carry out the intent of donors whose bequests to FPL are restricted to Outreach and Social Action. Here is a summary of Endowment Fund withdrawals by type.

Fund Type	FY 2019 Withdrawals (total expected by 6/30)***	FY 2020 Planned Withdrawals	Balance 4/30/2019
Unrestricted Funds and Operating Reserves	\$ 50,448 Funds \$ 57,985 from Op Reserves	\$121,240 Funds \$ 22,008 Op Reserves	\$2,285,262
Funds for Capital Projects	\$ 57,670	\$150,000 estimate, pending PC approval**	\$ 465,086
Funds for Outreach*	\$ 87,300	\$ 88,869	\$1,189,306
May Mkt, Sabbatical Funds	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 72,066
TOTAL	\$ 253,403	\$ 382,117	\$4,012,079

REAL ESTATE: In addition to our funds, we own three buildings: the Sanctuary, the Parish House and the Parsonage. The Parsonage was rented in FY 2019 and will be rented again inf FY 2020.

GRATITUDE: As I step down as Treasurer, I would like to thank our excellent Finance Committee with whom I enjoy collaborating. I am also glad that John Krzywicki has agreed to serve as Treasurer going forwards. As we respond to declining membership and continual competition for resources of time and money, the Treasurer's role can become political and challenging. I hope you will all treat John with respect and continue to give generously to FPL. Generous giving makes everything easier.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah D. Andrysiak, Treasurer

**The Preston Fund (the largest outreach fund) has grown to over \$900,000. The Parish, Finance and Outreach Committees have agreed to increase draws from this fund according with Donor intent.*

***The Facilities Committee has proposed several projects including \$100,000 to replace the Parish House roof. The Parish Committee will review the requests and determine which will proceed.*

****The numbers include \$135,685 of withdrawals as of 4/30/2019, as well as additional budgeted withdrawals through the end of the fiscal year. The \$77,000 raised in the 75/75 Campaign is currently in our Operating Reserve Account, and will be used to cover FY 2019 expenses.*

THE CHURCH IN ACTION

ADULT LEARNING COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Adult Learning Committee was created by the Parish Committee in the spring of 2018 to work with the minister and other committees to provide regular classes, lectures and small group conversation opportunities for adults. Mary Helen Lorenz was appointed as Chair, and began work on recruiting members and clarifying the goals with the help of Rev. Jenny in September.

Activities over the past year included:

1. Created a brochure with help from the Membership Committee, "Adult Opportunities for Engagement" that highlights Small Groups, the FPL Book Group, Meditation, and other adult programs.
2. Worked to create a new small group in addition to supporting existing small groups and their leaders with monthly thematic materials from Soul Matters.
3. Hosted in February with YPC a special lecture, "Educating our Children in the Age of Artificial Intelligence" that was open to the public and welcomed about 35+ participants.
4. Held a "brainstorming" session with representatives from key committees and members to discuss ideas for adult learning for the coming year.
5. Hosted with the Transition Team on April 28, Rev. Mark Harris who spoke about his book *Elite: Uncovering Classism in Unitarian Universalist History*. He tied that history to current challenges within our congregation and the wider community.

Plans for 2019-2020

1. Develop a program of 4-6 "Food for Thought Suppers", in collaboration with key committees, to spark discussion and support community.
2. Encourage a summer "church read" of *Waking Up White*, following up with book discussion in September to learn together about racism and white privilege. YPC may also select appropriate age books on the topic.
3. Work with and support three church members and Rev. Jenny who have offered to lead classes by creating schedules, publicity and other support.
4. Support committees and individuals who have ideas for classes and events to determine whether and how to offer them.

Special thanks to Becca Fasciano and Laura Regrut for their dedicated leadership in managing Small Group sign ups and supporting the Small Group Leaders for the past five years. And thanks to all the Committee Chairs, their members, Parish Committee and Rev. Jenny who have shared their ideas and their physical labor at times to help this new Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Helen Lorenz, Chair

The Adult Learning Committee: Janet Boynton, Mary Helen Lorenz (Chair), Mary Jo Veling, and Barbara Slayter (liaison from the Deacons)

CARE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Throughout the calendar year, the Care Committee supports our congregation and minister(s) by providing pastoral care. This is the close of the third full church year of care. We are honored to have been able to provide care for many of our church members: calling to see if our help can be used and working to determine how best that might be; just calling to check-in; preparing and delivering meals to those recovering from an illness, surgery, or great loss; sending out cards of support and concern; sending out birthday cards to our church elders; visiting members in their homes or in the hospital; arranging for pastoral singing.

When a situation requiring care reaches our attention, the committee offers and continues support until the crisis has abated.

We are grateful for the opportunity to be here supporting our congregation through those vulnerable times when help is most needed.

We are grateful for the many volunteers who give of their time to ensure food is prepared and delivered; who give of their voice and time to ensure “music from heaven” reaches the ears of those most in need, who alert us to need.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a difficulty and would like care or assistance, please contact a member of the Care Committee by finding us at Sunday services, calling the office, or emailing FPLCares@firstparishinlincoln.org.

We look forward to being here in the coming year to ease need, share comfort, and acknowledge joy.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Huber and Kim Buell, Co-Chairs

Care Committee Members: Don Bienfang, Sue Cornwall, Tom DeNormandie, Sandy Grindlay, John Krzywicki, R.L. Smith, and Susan Taylor

DEACONS' REPORT

In partnership with the minister, the mission of the Deacons is to provide leadership for the Sunday worship services and share responsibility for the spiritual direction, nurturance and enrichment of The First Parish in Lincoln. The Deacons work to provide a sounding board on spiritual matters for both the congregation and the minister and try to reflect the needs and concerns of the congregation in our church services and programs.

The Deacons met monthly with the minister. This was the first year of with Interim Minister Reverend Jenny Rankin at First Parish in Lincoln and she will be with us for a total of three years. We did not have an Intern minister this year, so this created a need to invite others to lead worship each month throughout the church year. These speakers included: Margaret Bullit Jones, Hauwa Ibrahim, Kaia Stern, Mariama White Hammond, Jade Sylvan, Rosemary Lloyd, Will McMillan, and

Jeannette Leardi. Also, the Deacons lead a snow day service in February, took part in a Mary Oliver service in March along with Jenny, and led the Solstice Service, Good Friday service, New Year's Meditation Service and assisted with Easter sunrise service.

A major focus of the Deacons over this church year was to facilitate orderly logistical support as we dealt with the departure of our minister and worked to welcome in and support Jenny in our worship space. The Deacons have updated many of their guides and there is a plan to put together new comprehensive "How to Guides" before the new church year begins to assist new Deacons and provide consistency.

During the year, there were a total of 46 services from September 2018 through June 2019 including three Christmas Eve Services, the Winter Solstice service, the New Year's meditation service, the Good Friday service, and three Easter services.

In March and May many of the Deacons and the Minister gathered along with other Leaders of the church to take part in workshops by Essential Partners entitled "The Power and Process of Reflective Structured Dialogue." All of the Deacons also took part in the Listening Circles that were hosted by the Transition Team and Jenny throughout the winter months.

In May, Deacons Paula Waterman and Deanna Laferriere took part in a program through the NE Region of the UUA along with members of the PC entitled "Walking the Talk of Covenant" out in Groton, Massachusetts.

During the summer of 2019 there will be two summer services on July 21 and August 11. In addition, the Deacons hope to offer additional opportunities to come together for meditation and possibly a field trip/visit to another parish.

Three communion services were held this year in November, February and May. And the topic of the Lenten Booklet was "Sources of Joy."

We were blessed by the wonderful contributions of our lay leaders this year who included: Tally Forbes, Peter Pease, Susie Rheault, Judy Casarella, Barbara O'Neil, Joan Mansfield, Susan Taylor, Tom DeNormandie, Sue Harmon, and Ray Shephard.

The Deacons are grateful for the help provided by members of the congregation who served as ushers, lay leaders, and participants in the Solstice, snow day service and Good Friday Services.

In December we were all so saddened by the loss of our Deacon for the Month of October 2018, Tim Aarset. We are forever grateful for the contributions that he made and will miss him always.

Respectfully submitted,
Deanna Laferriere, Chair

Deacons: Tim Aarset, Melinda Bruno-Smith, Mary Gaylord, Tom Haslett, Joan Kimball, Deanna Laferriere (Chair), Tom Risser, Barbara Slayter, Paula Waterman, and Ben Wells

FLOWER COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Flower Committee expanded to three members this year, with the welcome addition of Gretchen Covino and Heather Anderson.

The parishioners provided flowers for 31 of the 40 Sundays. The Flower Committee provided flowers and decorations for Thanksgiving, the Solstice service, Christmas Eve, Easter and Mothers' Day. Four Sundays were not spoken for.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Henderson, Chair

Flower Committee Members: Heather Anderson, Gretchen Covino, and Nancy Henderson (Chair)

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Every Sunday morning after church, our Hospitality Teams are here to greet you — with a table full of food and drinks, and a warm and welcoming environment in which to meet up with fellow parishioners and be joined by our kids and families. We are grateful for every cup of coffee, tea, cider, and lemonade; every plate of fresh cookies, scones, muffins, and fruits; and the beautiful Stearns Room in which to enjoy it all! But most especially, we're grateful to these wonderful Hospitality folks who provide and prepare all of it (and clean up afterward!):

R.L. Smith & Sue Stason,
Gina Halsted & Kathy Huber,
Kim Buell & and Diana Smith,
Rachel Mason, Jane O'Rourke, & Mimsy Beckwith

—with props as well to Ursula Matulonis and John Krzywicki, whose pop-up baking sprees are always a high point.

Respectfully submitted,
Mimsy Beckwith, Chair

CHURCH LIBRARY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

A Library Committee does not currently exist, and the Librarian and Church Library were not included in the Shared Ministry Review process last year.

Times have changed and communication has moved rapidly into new forms of technology. Approaching her late eighties, your Librarian is not part of the new technology. The time has come for me to formally resign as Librarian. I will always be available to assist a future Librarian in whatever way I am able.

Our small Church Library still holds a felt spirit—through memories of the long line of Library Committee Members who passed on the task with dedication: Margaret Flint, Astrid Donaldson, and Martha DeNormandie, to name a few. Kathie Brobeck and I carried on for several years. The gifts of books precious!

Decisions need to be made about the care and use of the Church Library which remains a repository for donated books, as well as a place for meetings. While there is a decline in the volume of books checked out, a Librarian is needed to process, organize, cull, and shelve books, and to integrate the library into new communication systems, and to find new ways to engage people and display materials.

It has been a privilege and a blessing to be part of the history of our Church Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Yos, Librarian

MAY MARKET COMMITTEE'S REPORT

You would never know that this is an “off year” for the May Market, as the basement is filled with treasures, waiting to be discovered. After the May 2018 sale we cleaned the basement, swept the floors and prepared for spring 2020.

It takes two years to collect enough to provide for a vibrant sale and we are doing our best to sort, clean and be ready for the 2020 May Market.

As you are de-cluttering please keep in mind that we will gratefully receive your items over the next year. We ask that you consider that they be in good condition. No chips, stains or broken items please as it makes the job all that much harder. When in doubt take to the Swap Table at the Transfer Station.

The favorites items are: antiques, jewelry, garden and nearly new. Any especially good gift items should be brought in time for the Touch of Christmas May Market table to be used for gift giving. Please mark your donations as TOC/MAY MARKET when you drop them off at the church so that we can store them in the special Christmas section of the basement.

Please Save The Dates for 2020:

Sunday, March 28th - Basement Brigade following church
Saturday, April 4th - May Market 9-1

Respectfully Submitted,
Tucker Smith, Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Our committee focused on the goal of welcoming visitors and embracing all members and friends this year. To that end, we pursued several projects and sponsored events for the First Parish in Lincoln community.

Highlights of the year included:

- An Open House Coffee Hour in October, to encourage families and visitors.
- Our “Gather Together Brunch” in November, which drew nearly 100 hungry souls.
- A first-ever “Sip, Talk, Learn” storytelling session in January, which was met with enthusiastic responses.
- “Let The Games Begin” for Winter Carnival in January, which brought kids and adults together to play board and floor games.
- The “Green Brunch” in March, featuring healthy edibles, reusable table settings and green growing centerpieces, was enjoyed by over 70 members.
- A second “Sip, Talk, Learn” in March demonstrated the lasting appeal of a Sunday afternoon activity.
- An information session in May for prospective members, to be followed by an FPL Member Signing ceremony during the June 2nd service.

In addition, we worked on tools and processes that helped us:

- Define our priorities with a committee mission statement
- Describe the “Paths to Membership” with a one-page statement
- Encourage congregational participation with a “Gifts and Treasures” volunteer signup form
- Welcome casual visitors, and track and support prospective members

These will be the foundation of an updated Welcome Kit that we hope to complete this year.

Finally, we acquired the rainbow arc of Adirondack chairs that now grace the Sanctuary lawn and underscore our commitments as an open, welcoming and affirming congregation.

Co-chairs Mary Stechschulte and Jennie Morris, along with Tucker Smith, Sarah Bishop, Katy Walker, Lucy Sachs, Jane O’Rourke and Jeannie O’Farrell, were thankful for the opportunity to serve the FPL community this year, and look forward to a vital future for all members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennie Morris and Mary Stechshulte, Co-Chairs

Membership Committee Members: Sarah Bishop, Jennie Morris (Co-Chair), Jeannie O’Farrell, Jane O’Rourke, Lucy Sachs, Mary Stechschulte (Co-Chair), Tucker Smith, and Katy Walker

MUSIC COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The music program at First Parish has had a great year. The choir roster totals 28 under the continued dynamic and inspiring leadership of our Director of Music, Ian Watson, now in his seventh year here. All of us here at the First Parish - choir, minister, and congregation - have enjoyed listening to and participating in a continued variety of choral and organ service music.

The Live in Lincoln Center concert series presented it's first concert of the season with a selection of sonatas for vocal, strings and harpsichord by Vivaldi, Corelli, Bach and Handel, performed by members of the Handel & Haydn Society on October 20, 2018 at 3 p.m.

And again, in what's become a tradition, Handel's Messiah was performed featuring performances by Handel & Haydn Society musicians and soloists on December 22, 2018 at 3 p.m., to *near standing room only* attendance at the Parish House Auditorium.

The third concert of the season, an original adaptation of Shakespeare's The Tempest, was presented by the Henry Purcell Society of Boston in collaboration with The Poets' Theatre, featuring music by Henry Purcell and other Baroque composers, was held at the Parish House Auditorium on March 24, 2019 at 3 p.m.

Due to the efforts of many choir and FPL volunteers, the Live in Lincoln Center events run smoothly and combined generated a surplus of donations over expenses, which will be used to help fund next year's programs.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Mandelkorn, Chair

Music Committee: Colleen Katsuki, Sarah Fiebig, Kim Buell, Joan Mansfield, Karin Levy, Diana Smith, Tom Risser, Edie Mackie, Rick Mandelkorn (chair), and Ian Watson, Director of Music (ex officio)

HANDBELL CHOIR'S REPORT

The Handbell Choir has been part of the First Parish music program since 1983 when the music and religious education committees joined together to raise money to purchase the church's first set of three octave Schulmerich bells. Over the years, the choir gave fundraising concerts to add more octaves. A three octave set of Schulmerich handchimes was purchased in 2009 thanks to a generous donation from May Market as well as from individual contributions from members of the church. In 2015, five new base chimes and two base bells were gifted by two longtime members of the choir. Five more base bells have since been added.

The choir has been fortunate to be under the direction of Diane Burke who not only leads the church's handbell choir, but also rings in an elite audition choir, in addition to directing two other area choirs. She infuses the group with confidence and commitment. She has brought the FPL ringers to a new level of musicality, one which is recognized by the New England handbell community. The choir has thirteen members, half of whom are members of First Parish.

This year the choir rang in church four times, gave its eighth annual Christmas Candlelight Concert to a packed Parish House audience. As part of their community outreach, they performed for Wayland's Council on Aging, rang twice at Concord's Newbury Court, and once for the Life Care Center of Acton. For the past three years, the choir has rung twice for services at First Parish Concord in eternal gratitude for their welcoming the choir and offering storage and rehearsal space during the construction of the Stearns Room. The choir will continue to do so. First Parish Concord took them in when they had no place to go.

In February, several members of the choir ran a winter workshop for the church school. They caught on quickly and were enthusiastically ringing tunes by the end of the session. The choir looks forward to working more with the kids.

The choir will be joining 600 other New England area ringers in West Hartford to participate in four days of workshops, rehearsals and performances under the aegis of the Handbell Musicians of America.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Tatlock, Handbell Choir Member

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Outreach Committee has three key responsibilities: (1) to oversee FPL's donations to charity in keeping with our weekly vows to affirm each person's dignity, cherish the living earth, and pursue the goals of peace and justice in this community and around the world; (2) to identify, promote, and facilitate volunteer efforts, mindful of the call to give selves as well as dollars; and (3) to raise awareness of issues and events of interest to FPL members. The first is our most longstanding and most time-consuming. The others are growing rapidly. Here are some highlights of the past year.

- The Jean Wood Preston Grant Awards, our largest grant program, was expanded to include a new grant line for Transformative Innovation in addition to the pre-existing Capital Improvement grants—with impressive results, thanks in no small part to greater involvement in our members at large in the nominating process. We received a record number of applications (22); and a PC-approved budget increase allowed us to make five awards (one in fall, four in spring), ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000.
- The FPL Green Faith-in-Action Group, launched in 2018 under Tom Walker's leadership in response to a poll of FPL members that named energy and climate change the most urgent public priority, succeeded in all three of its ambitious goals: its proposal for solar panel installation on the Parish House roof that promises to save FPL \$8000 annually for the 25-year life of the project and two green energy challenges to FPL members at large: conversion of home electrical generation to 100% wind power; and replacement of gas-powered by electric vehicles.
- Outreach sponsored a series of individual and group events, including two guest sermons (by UCC Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas and Rev. Dr. Kaia Stern of Concord Prison Outreach), a visit to the UUUM headquarters in Roxbury by an FPL contingent of 15; the annual Concord Prison sing,

joined by 25 members; a service day at the Waltham Community Day Center in which 25 FPL members helped prepare and serve the mid-day meal; a May celebration of Lincoln METCO's 50th anniversary at the Parish House that we hope may help inspire FPL and community diversity awareness efforts; a multi-generational May work day at Farrington NatureLinc; and a program of weekly deliveries of food to Open Table, Maynard, overseen by Bill Stason, for which a half-dozen other members have volunteered.

- The committee established a Youth FIAT and a small-grant program to help strengthen efforts on behalf of charities by FPL young people of all ages.
- Our highly successful *Outreach Newsletter*, edited by Jillian Darling since its 2017 inception, was extended from its original 100 subscribers to the entire FPL mailing list.
- Thanks to the generosity of our members, our three special holiday offerings raised nearly 40% more than the projected \$12,000.

Our thanks to Parish Administrator Gert McDermott, Interim Minister Jenny Rankin, DRE Margit Griffith, PC Chair Tim Moynihan, Treasurer Sarah Andrysiak, Finance Committee Chair Gary Taylor, and many other fellow FPL members for help and guidance during the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Buell, Chair

Outreach Committee Members: Melissa Brooks, Larry Buell (Chair), Jillian Darling, Becca Fasciano, Ralph Smith, Bill Stason, Susan Hands Taylor, and Tom Walker

Outreach Giving FY19 [as of 13 May 2019]

I—from FPL Operating Budget

FPL Faith in Action Groups/other Social Action

Friday Night Suppers	meals for the hungry in Boston	\$1006
Family Furnishers	home goods for needy families moving in	500 [est]
Parish Garden	fresh produce for food pantries	500 [est]
Outreach Volunteer/Social Action	[UUUM membership, reimbursements]	750 [est]
Youth FIAT	Little Library by 5 th /6 th graders	300
Total FPL FIAT anticipated		\$3056

Grants to Local/Regional Charities from Operating Budget Allocation

Community Day Center of Waltham	aid, comfort, nourishment for homeless	\$1000
Dignity in Asylum, Concord	housing for asylees	\$1000
Domestic Violence Service Network	counseling/advocacy for victims of abuse	\$1000
Eliot Comm. Human Services	monthly mental health clinics (Linc COA)	\$624
Lincoln Emergency Assistance Fund	aid for those in financial crisis	\$1000
Lincoln Food Pantry, St. Joseph's	monthly food support	\$1000
MetroWest Free Medical Program	medical services for the needy	\$1000
Open Table, Maynard/Concord	regional food pantry	\$1000
Partakers	college courses for prisoners	\$500

Grants still pending	\$4070
Total Grants to Charities Anticipated from Operating Budget	\$12,194

Total FIAT & Grants Anticipated, Operating Budget Allocation (100%) \$15,250

Special Holiday Offerings

Groundwork Lawrence	relief for gas explosion victims	\$6064
Chaplains on the Way, Waltham	winter morning meals/hours for Day Ctr	\$5307
Eliot Human Services/Lincoln COA	mental health clinics, Lincoln Woods	\$5376

Total Holiday Offerings (originally budget projection = \$12,000) \$16,747

II—Grants from Endowed Funds

Bergen & Williams Endowments) for at-risk Youth

Matenwa Comm Learning Center	Primary school, Haiti	\$2000
Precious Project	Orphanage and school, Tanzania	\$2000
UUUM Summer Camp Scholarships	Day camp for low-income Boston kids	\$2000
Farrington NatureLinc	Bring low-income urban kids to nature	\$2000
Lincoln METCO Coord.Comm	Lincoln summer camp scholarships	\$2000
S. Sudanese Enrichment for Families	Saturday Bridges Program	\$1000
Grants still pending		\$1339

Total Bergen & Williams-funded Grants Anticipated (100% of allocation) \$12,339

Jean Wood Preston Endowment

Chaplains on the Way	New homeless empowerment program	\$11,240
Green Roots, Chelsea	Farm for urban poor in food desert	\$10,000
MetroWest Free Medical Program	Seed money for staff insurance consultant	\$25,000
Refugee Immigration & Assntnce Ctr.	Facility upgrade for after-school activities and ESL classes	\$10,000
[Grant pending]		\$15,000

Total Preston Grants (maximum allotted = \$75,000) \$71,240

TOUCH OF CHRISTMAS FAIR

On Saturday, December 8th the Parish House was transformed into a sparkling and festive center of holiday celebration. This year's Fair netted, after expenses, a little over \$15,000 to support the church and its programs.

Dozens of people contributed to the success of the Fair by decorating beautiful wreaths and centerpieces, baking, creating hand-crafted items, donating special items and working at the fair in countless ways. Warm thanks to everyone 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. Diana and Heather put in long hours recruiting helpers, scouring the woods for greens and creating over 100 wreaths. Also, many thanks to those that contributed fresh greens, berries, and pinecones and huge thanks to the dozens of others that spent their mornings creating the wreaths.

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

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

Halsted Family for spending a day of their Thanksgiving holiday to put up the twinkling lights in the Parish House Auditorium

Susan Pease and Lindsay Clemens for providing a warm and delicious lunch to sustain the workers setting up the day before the fair.

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.

R.L. Smith and his band of helpers who donned chef hats and aprons early in the day to make and serve the beloved tradition of Psalm Soup and salad. Special thanks to **Chris Hamilton and Paula Waterman** for being the supportive sous chefs.

David Levy and Joe Robbat who brought back the Christmas latte to the delight of coffee drinkers everywhere. It was the second year we sold homemade latte's at the Fair, with much acclaim.

Jackie Lenth and Gina Halsted who took creativity and humor to a whole new level while encouraging the artist in others 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.

Susan Pease and Lindsay Clemens who (ever cheerfully) inspired the inner baker in dozens of kitchens resulting in tables piled with delicious and lovely home-baked goodies.

Tom Risser, commonly known as Santa, who made his jolly entrance by delighting the crowd with a rumba through the aisles before perching on his throne to hear the children's holiday wishes and to pose for a photo with little one.

Heidi Nichols for ensuring that each child had the opportunity to go home with a photo of themselves sitting on Santa's lap.

Sylvia Perry 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 days before the fair – and happily sold after the fair.

Jen Holleran for joining us again as the Cookie Decorating table chief – Jen arrived with 150+ beautiful homemade cookies and tubs of colored icing and candies to the delight of dozens of children.

Jayne Mundt and Lucy Sachs for joining us as the chiefs of the Ornament Decorating table – Jayne and Lucy lent their artistic talents to the children’s delight.

Sarah Bishop and Anna Bishop who set up a magical Children’s Room upstairs where little ones could purchase holiday gifts for their family and friends.

Ken Hurd for creating the wonderful atmosphere with his expert Christmas carols on the piano.

Karin Levy and Carol Carmody who together sold raffle tickets to generous holiday shoppers looking to support the Fair in hopes to win one of the three cash prizes.

The Lincoln Fire Department for delivering Santa in style on the Lincoln Fire Truck.

Don Halsted and Jim Fleming who managed the money the entire day of the fair and counted cash long into the afternoon.

Gert McDermott who quietly, effectively and cheerfully managed innumerable tasks and calls behind the scenes.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Fleming & Karin Levy, Co-Chairs

TRANSITION TEAM’S REPORT

In November 2018, and at the recommendation of our new interim minister, Rev. Jenny Rankin, the Parish Committee appointed a Transition Team comprised of seven members representing a cross-section of parishioners. Our charge is to lead the congregation during a period of healing and self-reflection as we review our recent history, re-affirm or transform our identity as an institution, and help the congregation prepare to meet new ministerial leadership with renewed energy and a clear vision. The product of this parish-wide effort will be to lay a foundation upon which an honest profile of who we are as a community of faith can be prepared for use by a Search Committee that will be formed in the Spring of 2020.

Members of the Transition Team include: Gina Halsted – Co-Chair
 Chris Hamilton
 Kathy Huber
 Ken Hurd
 Elizabeth Kelly
 R.L. Smith – Co-Chair
 Liz Wilkinson

The Team is proud to share its accomplishments for the past seven months which were guided by the superb wisdom and experience of Rev. Rankin.

Despite the somewhat late start in November, the group met four times before Christmas to understand and document their charter and prepare for their work. The Team reviewed literature, books and documentation to understand the role of a Transition Team and the opportunities that an Interim Periods provides a church community.

The Team created and committed to a Covenant for working together.

The Team also committed to the guiding principle of transparency and frequent communication to the congregation. To this end, R.L. Smith created a clear and nimble web site (www.transition.fplincn.org) that quickly became the repository for a tremendous amount of information about the team and their work. Updates on the Transition Team's focus and work have been included in nearly every Parish News Brief and Parish News.

The Team quickly identified the need within the First Parish community for open and respectful dialogues about a number of topics. The most immediate need was for parishioners to be able to reflect on and share their experience with the former minister, Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti and their reaction to his departure. Rev. Rankin trained the Team on a structured dialogue technique that would encourage respectful listening and sharing. The first round of self-reflective exercises, called Listening Circles, were launched in January. Team members hosted a total of twelve small 90-minute Listening Circles, two or three times a week throughout the month. Ultimately 120 parishioners participated, allowing everyone to share their unique story and honest feelings about the events leading up to the departure of our previous minister after only three years. The Transition Team compiled what was heard and reported out to the congregation in a well-attended meeting after services on March 3rd. Feedback on the Listening Circles was extremely positive, and parishioners expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss their feelings and thoughts in a safe and respectful way.

Also during January, the Transition Team organized and sponsored a retreat for the church leadership. Thirty-one church leaders from the Parish Committee, Deacons, Transition Team and other committees attended an all-day meeting focused on three major themes: Learning from the Past, Trust, and Top Transition Issues. After the Retreat, the Team digested the many insightful comments and suggestions and created a summary for the participants.

Around this time, a video made by Rev. Mishra-Marzetti made in November 2018 about his experience serving in a church in “a small new England town” surfaced. This led to additional pain

for many members of the congregation, but also created the opportunity for additional open discussion and healing.

On Sunday, February 10th, the Transition Team hosted a parish-wide gathering in the Stearns Room to provide the opportunity to discuss reactions to the video. With the help of a consultant from Essential Partners, a group skilled in facilitating difficult conversations across divides, over 100 participants expressed their reaction to the video, discussed the strengths of the church that could be called upon and suggested resources outside of the church to consider using. The series of exercises combined sharing thoughts in smaller, breakout groups followed by reporting out to the larger assembly. Notes from the sessions were gathered, digested and compiled by the team, and reported back to the congregation in early March. At that gathering, the team heard requests for a less structured method of dialogue about the video. The Team hosted two additional gatherings that enabled participants to more deeply express their reactions.

Learning from the facilitation of the Listening Circles, the Team recognized that they would need additional training in the facilitation of difficult conversations. They engaged Essential Partners to provide this training for the Team and many other members of the church.

On Saturday, March 16th, Transition Team members as well as members of the Parish Committee, Deacons and other organizations attended an all-day training session by Essential Partners for an advanced technique of facilitating difficult conversations known as Reflective Structured Dialogue or RSD. This process is designed to allow for listening, feedback and exchange of views amongst participants with a goal of building greater trust and understanding of each other through respectful dialogue. A second half-day of training built on that foundation and provided greater depth and breadth of knowledge on facilitating potentially challenging conversations. The training has prepared the Team, Deacons, and many other members of the church to host a series of dialogues about our identity as a church, the Vision for our future and a host of other topics. A total of 17 church members have been trained as facilitators.

The trained facilitators met in May to create a list of topics that will be important for the Church congregation to consider deeply next year.

A pilot program using the Reflective Structured Dialogue technique was launched in May. Transition Team members mentored newly trained facilitators in leading small group gatherings focused on spirituality. Called “Can We Talk...” these sessions encouraged participants to explore their individual spiritual journeys and share personal stories that inform their membership and involvement in First Parish. Participants also explored ways in which the church could add further spiritual value to their lives.

Besides facilitation training and leading small group dialogues, members of the Transition team have been intersecting with other committees and groups. Members of the Team worked with Mary Helen Lorenz and Janet Boynton to identify adult education needs and interests for the coming year. Through this cooperative work, a focus on understanding issues of race, class and white privilege is already underway.

The Team also identified the need for parishioners and leadership to better understand the spiritual underpinnings of both the UCC and UUA churches. To that end, the Transition Team co-hosted a

lecture and discussion by the Rev. Mark Harris from the First Parish of Watertown on the role that social class has played in the development of the UUA church. Additionally, the Team hosted the Rev. Keith Kron, National Transitions Director at the UUA, for a sermon and well attended question and answer session on topics including the transition process, the role of the interim minister, goals of the interim period and choosing and empowering a settled minister search.

Members of the Team have participated in UUA and UCC sponsored webinars and workshops on topics such as “Transforming Conversations in Divisive Times: Meeting the Challenge in Communities of Faith,” “UU Social Media and Membership Growth” and “Walking the Talk of the Covenant.”

The Team would like to thank Rev. Rankin for her excellent guidance and unflagging support. With her continued direction and partnership, we look forward to helping the congregation of First Parish in Lincoln discover and articulate our identity as a spiritual community. We still have a great deal to reflect upon and share. There is still much to explore and learn. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,
Gina Halsted and R.L. Smith, Co-Chairs

Transition Team Members: Gina Halsted (Co-Chair), Chris Hamilton, Kathy Huber, Ken Hurd, Elizabeth Kelly, R.L. Smith (Co-Chair), and Liz Wilkinson

YOUTH PROGRAMS COMMITTEE’S REPORT

The Youth Programs Committee (YPC) is a volunteer group that works closely with the staff Director of Religious Education (DRE) in developing and supporting a Religious Education (RE) program that engages children to discover and explore spirituality and ethical values through age appropriate programming. The YPC has an important role in long term planning, budget and policy recommendations, as well problem solving for FPL’s RE program.

The principal goal of the YPC for 2018/19 RE year was to establish a vigorous comprehensive program of worship, activities and learning on Sunday for infants, children and youth. This was achieved through Margit Griffith’s hard work and leadership as DRE along with the support of the YPC. Margit has very successfully completed the initial “startup” period as DRE. Her compassion, energy, intelligence, and enthusiasm have rejuvenated the RE program at FPL. Prior to her hire the program’s many areas needed to be addressed. With an outgoing personality and personal warmth, Margit took leadership of RE and built both morale and confidence of the congregation in the RE program. Next year Margit and the YPC will continue to work closely together to enhance FPL RE.

On Sundays, Margit usually leads a Time for All Ages with all children gathered round her in the Sanctuary at the beginning of the service with the entire congregation. This affirms that children are an integral, cherished part of congregational worship. On most Sundays, children then leave the Sanctuary for Sunday School classes in the Parish House. As the DRE Report indicates, FPL has re-established a comprehensive Sunday RE program for children up to Year 8 comprising classes for different ages with a broad curriculum but unified by our core beliefs embraced by

FPL's Covenant. The YPC supports the work of the DRE in many areas including teacher recruitment and curriculum support.

At regular intervals during the Church year formal Sunday School classes are interrupted with other events. The YPC has an important role in organizing these special events. The Winter/Advent Workshops bring children together with adults to work on shared projects. This intergenerational event emphasizes a particular advantage of our small program where children can have the enriching experience of working closely with the remarkable members of FPL who in turn rejoice spending time with our equally remarkable children.

The YPC has also fostered the importance of intergenerational services in the life of the Church. These have enthusiastically been supported by the Deacons and the Interim Minister. In these services, children and parents give readings, playlets, prayers as well as homilies from the pulpit. These services have also been enriched by the Children's Choir singing music they have rehearsed on Sunday evenings. After these services, other Church committees and volunteers have supported the YPC by organizing pot luck lunches. These communal meals are a chance to renew friendships and make new friends especially with families in the Church. A very successful innovation last year was staging the traditional Children's Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary as part of Sunday Worship. This was a joyful occasion with many new faces joining us in the Sanctuary to celebrate both our children and the coming festive season. The success of these events indicates the strong commitment by the Minister, Deacons and congregation generally, to have children and families sharing worship in the Sanctuary with the entire congregation.

Administratively, the re-establishment of an organized RE program under a strong staff DRE and an able and engaged senior minister has removed the need for the YPC to have a supervisory role and permitted the YPC to revert to the traditional advisory, support and program development role. The DRE now reports the Senior Minister, although the DRE and YPC chairs meet almost weekly and work collaboratively to nurture the program. Also, the Children's Choir director reports to the DRE as will the Youth Program leader (when appointed) enhancing the coordination of RE programming. Furthermore, to improve efficiency for next school year, a designated YPC member will be rostered each month to coordinate different events following the Deacons successful example.

Although a major goal set last year was reached, namely re-establishing a comprehensive RE program, growing the program with greater numbers of children has proven elusive. Attendance has been highly variable, frustrating both class planning and volunteer teachers. Last year great strides were made in rebuilding Sunday School but it will likely be a number of years before these efforts will bear fruit after such long period of decline. Hopefully, with time the number of children will grow as the Sunday School maintains its momentum.

Nevertheless, it is clear a serious impediment to the growth of our Sunday School is the fact that there are too many competing demands on Sundays for many families to commit consistently to attending Sunday School. After many discussions, including a very valuable parent dinner, there is a strong consensus in the YPC that the present Sunday only program does not work for many families. Therefore, providing events and activities for children at other times during the week is seen as a path to increase family involvement in the life of the Church. The YPC believes there is a need to broaden the scope of our program to include weekday activities and events for families,

parents and children. The YPC also feels a high priority should be given to developing a program designed specifically for parents that helps them with parenting and provides opportunities for parents to share fellowship and give support in raising families in a complex and challenging world. The YPC will look for ways to collaborate with other groups in the Church and in the Lincoln community to help build these programs. Therefore, the major goal of the YPC for next year is building new programs during the week to cater to these needs. However, none of these proposals will weaken the commitment to the Sunday program which will be continuously developed by the DRE in collaboration with the YPC. We are mindful of the great progress in Sunday RE programs and that Sunday School is foundational to the life of the Church.

The YPC thanks retiring members who have rotated off the committee after many years of service. Sarah and Anna Bishop, Kemon Taschioglou, Jessica Packineau and Pilar Doughty have generously contributed of their time and energy to support the work of the YPC. We are also very glad that they continue to support RE through volunteering help at different RE activities. The YPC is also very grateful that Hannah Stephenson continue to serve on the YPC giving leadership and support to our RE program. The YPC also welcomes new members: Hannah Bureau, Joan Mansfield and Alice DeNormandie who will now help guide our program. Hannah Bureau brings design and media skills which were well deployed in producing a beautiful brochure describing FPL Sunday School and other programs. Joan Mansfield who has served the church in many roles and will now bring her energy and wisdom to our RE program. Alice DeNormandie has returned to Lincoln after living and working in New York where she was a Director of Religious Education for many years. We greatly appreciate her enthusiasm and expertise in helping us develop a strong program.

The YPC also thanks the Parish Committee under the leadership of Tim Moynihan for their steadfast support of the FPL RE program. We especially thank Sarah Andrysiak who, as treasurer, has supported YPC and the DRE with RE budget and expenditure issues. The YPC also continues very grateful that the FPL congregation has always generously supported financially the Religious Education program seeing its importance to the future of the Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Robbat Kelly and Stephen Brand, Co-Chairs

Youth Programs Committee Members: Anna Bishop, Sarah Bishop, Stephen Brand (Co-Chair), Pilar Doughty, Elizabeth Robbat Kelly (Co-Chair), and Hannah Stevenson