

2024-2025 Annual Reports

prepared for the

Annual Meeting

May 18, 2025

First Parish Unitarian Universalist
Arlington, Massachusetts

We choose to be
a liberal religious community,
welcoming to all.

We encourage each other
on our spiritual journeys,

support one another
through the changes in our lives,

and challenge
the excesses and injustices of our time.

Called to love
and upheld by joy,
We live our faith.

Mission adopted by a vote of the members of
First Parish Unitarian Universalist, in Arlington, Massachusetts, 2010

Table of Contents

Warrant for the Annual Meeting May 18, 2025	4
Appendix A: Resolution Conferring Emerita Status on the Reverend Marta Flanagan.....	5
Parish Committee and Staff Reports	6
Parish Committee.....	6
Report: Lead Minister, Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan.....	8
Core Commitment and Covenants of the Ministers.....	16
Information about the Ministers.....	18
Ministerial Contact List, 2024-2025.....	19
Report: Office Manager, Ebiere Omoregie.....	20
Staff Covenant.....	21
Highlights in the Life of First Parish since 2009.....	23
First Parish by the Numbers 2024-2025	25
Membership.....	25
Sunday Worship Attendance.....	25
Religious Education.....	27
First Parish Notables.....	28
Program Reports	29
Report: Minister of Religious Education, Rev. Stevie Carmody.....	29
Standing Committees' Reports	32
Finance Committee.....	32
Human Resource Committee.....	33
Leadership Development Committee.....	34
Membership Committee.....	34
Property Committee.....	37
Religious Education Committee.....	38
Stewardship Committee.....	42
Trustees of the First Parish Trust Funds.....	43
Music Committee.....	45
Committee, Group, Program and Team Reports	46
Art Exhibition Committee.....	46
Blood Drives at First Parish 2024-2025.....	47
Committee on Ministry (COM).....	48
Covenant Groups.....	49
Ferry Beach Retreat Planning.....	51
Lay Ministry.....	52
Memorial Garden Committee.....	53
Men's Group.....	54
Shared Ministry.....	55

Worship Associates.....	56
Turning Outward Groups.....	59
Alliance.....	59
Climate Action Working Group.....	60
Racial Justice Coordinating Committee.....	60
Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG).....	62
Jewish Connections.....	64
UU Urban Ministry.....	64
Welcoming Congregation Committee (WCC).....	65
Financial Reports.....	67
Auditor.....	67
Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.....	68
Giving First and Special Initiatives.....	69
Profit & Loss, Year Ending April, 2025.....	70
Balance Sheet As of April 30, 2025.....	72
Finance and Budget Background Data 2024-2025 Revenue.....	76
Proposed Budget for FY 2025 – 2026.....	77
Appendix I: Minutes from First Parish’s Annual Meeting, May 18, 2024.....	80

Warrant for the Annual Meeting May 18, 2025

WARRANT

May 18, 2025

FIRST PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

To all members of First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, Massachusetts:

The Annual Meeting has been called at 12:00 PM on Sunday, May 18, 2025, at 630 Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington, Massachusetts. The meeting will be an in-person meeting in the sanctuary with a livestream on Zoom. Zoom attendees will be able to see and hear the meeting, but Zoom attendees will not be able to speak or vote. Zoom attendees do NOT need to register to attend.

Members empowered to vote by our bylaws are asked to decide the following at this meeting:

1. To receive the reports of the Officers, the Ministers, other staff, and the committees and organizations of the church.
2. To elect First Parish Officers and Standing Committee members. To recognize outgoing volunteer leaders.
3. To see if the members will make such appropriations as are recommended by the Parish Committee in a proposed budget for the fiscal year 2025-2026 and authorize expenditures under the control and direction of the Parish Committee, in accordance with the budget adopted.
4. To see if the members will authorize the Parish Committee to appoint lay and ministerial delegates to represent First Parish at meetings of the Unitarian Universalist Association and any other organizations requiring representation of the church.
5. To see if the members will confer the title *Minister Emerita* on the Reverend Marta Flanagan, per the Resolution Conferring Emerita Status, as recommended unanimously by the Parish Committee.
6. To see and act upon any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

By vote of the Parish Committee, April 29, 2025, Anne Quaadgras (Chair), John Anderson (Vice-Chair), Joanna Pushee (Clerk), Carolyn Hodges (Treasurer), Susan Moore, Kate Tranquada, Jeff Keffer, Steve McMullin, and Allan Tosti.

This notice to all members of First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, Massachusetts, complies with our bylaws, as amended through May 15, 2016.

By: Joanna Pushee, First Parish Clerk

Appendix A: Resolution Conferring Emerita Status on the Reverend Marta Flanagan

RESOLUTION CONFERRING EMERITA STATUS ON THE REVEREND MARTA FLANAGAN

WHEREAS, Rev. Marta Flanagan has served with distinction as the Lead Minister of First Parish Unitarian Universalist Arlington from 2009 to 2025; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, she has led the congregation through significant growth and stability, instilled a sense of what it means to be in religious community, provided numerous examples of fostering Beloved Community, and established structures and systems which have led to great strength in lay leadership as well as increased social justice advocacy; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Marta Flanagan has demonstrated unwavering commitment to the mission and values of Unitarian Universalism, spiritual depth, and fostering a culture of turning outward; and

WHEREAS, her leadership has had a profound and lasting impact on the congregation, including current and former members, lay leaders, and staff members;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the voting members of First Parish UU Arlington do hereby confer upon the Reverend Marta Flanagan the title of ***Minister Emerita***, with all the rights, honors, and privileges thereto pertaining, as a testament to our deep appreciation for her exemplary devotion, skill, grace, integrity, and vision.

Important Background Information on the Minister Emerita Warrant Article

The Minister Emerita title honors Marta's long and meritorious service to First Parish Arlington. Because it is about her service to us, only First Parish can bestow this honor. The UUA requires a congregational vote for this.

Voting yes:

- Allows Marta to represent First Parish at any General Assembly as a voting delegate.
- Carries no financial obligations for First Parish
- Does not change the UUMA guidelines around expectations of how a retired minister and former congregation relate
- Involves listing Marta as Minister Emerita in all staff listings, including on the First Parish website, letterhead, and in First Parish Publications such as the orders of service and Workings Booklet.

Parish Committee and Staff Reports

Parish Committee

Contact: parcom-members@firstparish.info

Committee Name: **Parish Committee**

Purpose/Mission: The Parish Committee (“ParCom”) is the governing board of First Parish and is responsible for providing leadership and vision, creating policies, and managing the affairs of First Parish in service to its mission. Other tasks include prioritizing expenditures, developing the annual budget for congregational approval, monitoring finances, and planning the annual meeting.

Chair: Anne Quaadgras

Committee members:

- Anne Quaadgras (Chair): Second term ends 2025
- John Anderson (Vice-Chair): First term ends 2026
- Joanna Pushee (Clerk): First term ends 2025
- Carolyn Hodges (Treasurer): Second term ends 2027
- Steve McMullin: Term ends 2025
- Al Tosti: Second term ends 2027
- Jeff Keffer: First term ends 2026
- Susan Moore: Term ends 2026
- Kate Tranquada: First term ends 2027

Major activities:

- Held retreat to identify three 2025-26 priorities:
 - Supporting (and increasing) volunteer Engagement by developing Realm’s capabilities to support an effective volunteering infrastructure, including training and implementation processes
 - Continuing the work on Charting a Course: visioning for our future
 - Work on improving communications through multiple mechanisms including a regular table at Sunday Coffee hour (somewhat superseded by Marta’s Retirement announcement and the ParCom work required to start the transition)
- Developed policies to implement the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave provisions to enable Rev. Erica to understand and effectively make use of her parental leave options
- Collaborated closely with Stewardship Committee to design and conduct successful stewardship drive
- Developed 2025-26 budget for congregational approval that increases costs-of-living adjustments for all staff

- Continued the *Rose of Recognition* to recognize individuals and groups ‘going above and beyond’
- Following Marta’s retirement announcement in November 2024:
 - Created process for appointing members of the Interim Lead Minister Search committee, developed draft contract, and supported the Search Committee in developing requirements, materials preparation and planning for interviews. In the weeks after Annual meeting the Search committee will recommend a candidate, and Parish Committee will hire and negotiate the final contract with the candidate
 - Coordinated and supported multiple mechanisms for the congregation to celebrate Marta’s ministry and say goodbye to her
 - Developed an Amended and Restated Contract for Reverend Erica for the duration of Interim ministry (two years), as her original contract would become void upon Marta’s retirement
 - Created policy and procedure to support bestowing Emeritus/a status on retiring ministers
 - Nominated Marta for Minister Emerita for a congregational vote at the 2025 annual meeting

Challenges or opportunities for improvement:

- Balance a diverse array of congregational concerns and needs
- Continue to improve clarity and cadence of communication
- Balance priorities and investments to promote healthy spiritual growth together with values-based engagement with the wider world in an increasingly complex environmental, political, and social environment

2025-2026 Priorities:

- Manage the multi-year ministry transition period, working closely with the Interim Lead Minister and communicating clearly with staff and congregants about processes and needs
- Review alternative committee structures, volunteer pathways, and staffing support as congregational needs, demands on staff, the external environment, and congregants’ work, family, and commitments for attention continue to change
- Support implementation of new Realm-based Volunteer infrastructure capabilities

Report: Lead Minister, Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan

Contact: marta.flanagan@firstparish.info

At least three large sets of events shaped the life and spirit of First Parish this year.

- In November Donald Trump was elected President for a second time. His inauguration on January 20 launched an astounding array of government cutbacks and redirection that stunned most in the congregation. With so many members working directly or indirectly for area universities these changes affected our spirits, plans and livelihoods. Many others were deeply affected by neighbors living with the prospect of deportation. In forty years of ministry I have not seen public events have such an impact, week after week, on worship themes, educational programming and in numerous gatherings and conversations. We adjusted to meet the depth of spiritual need as well as providing opportunities for people to respond. The need remains with us.
- Births and deaths close to home impacted us as well. Five members or children of members died over just two and half months this fall. Parents, partners and friends in the congregation continue to make their way through a season of grief.

David Landskov

Member of First Parish
Died September 1, 2024

Barbara McCauley

Member of First Parish and mother of First Parish member Sean McCauley
Died September 23, 2024

Diane Barry

Member of First Parish and wife of First Parish member Celia Weislo
Died September 23, 2024

Louise Strayhorn

Member of First Parish and wife of First Parish member Andrew Fischer
Died October 21, 2024

Rosie Hadley-Walker

Daughter of First Parish member Amy Hadley
Died November 11, 2024

Janet Blodgett

Member of First Parish
Died April 20, 2025

Even so we welcomed new life. In August Parish Minister Rev. Erica announced her pregnancy. “DJ” (Dorothy Julian) was born on January 27! Rev. Erica took 3.5 months of full time parental leave ending in mid-May. During that period Rev. Tricia Brennan served as a part time Adjunct Minister. Tricia's time with us was marked by warmth, grace and care.

- In November after serving as Lead Minister since 2009 I announced my retirement in June 2025. What an honor it has been to hold your stories, your pain and your joys these last 16 years. What a privilege it has been to speak from your pulpit telling our stories, offering words of both comfort and challenge. How exciting it has been to chart a course with you of spiritual growth, community connection and turning outward to a larger world!

I was ordained to the ministry 38 years ago. In recent years the stress of parish ministry began to affect my health. In retirement Charlie and I will make Vermont our home. I look forward to a more balanced life. I plan to resume work as a spiritual director, meeting one-one-one with people nurturing their relationships with the Holy. And I expect that like Rev. Tricia Brennan, I will occasionally provide ministry to congregations in temporary need.

In January the Parish Committee, in consultation with the Unitarian Universalists Association appointed an Interim Lead Minister Search Committee in which crafted a congregation profile and prepared to review candidates for the position of Interim Lead Minister beginning in May. We can expect an Interim Lead Minister to start on August 1 for the next two years.

I have enormous confidence in the future of First Parish as members and lay leaders consider what has been and what you would like to engage in the next rich chapter of First Parish's history.

With a full heart, I say thank you,

Marta

Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan, Lead Minister

From the Lead Minister's statement in Worship, November 24, 2024

You called me by a vote of the congregation in 2009. This is my sixteenth year serving as a minister at First Parish. The congregation I came to

- had lingering wounds from conflicts that resulted in the dismissal of the previously called minister.
- did not give away half its offering each Sunday as we have done every Sunday since 2010.
- had a part time DRE and one ministerial position. We now have a full time Minister of Religious Education, a full time Parish Minister and myself as Lead Minister.
- had no lay ministry program as currently conceived, no wider network of care, no prayer shawl ministry.
- did not have the extensive social justice working groups or the level of engagement we now enjoy—or banners of social witness on the meetinghouse lawn.
- did not have worship associates or regular lay participation and input into Sunday worship.
- it had what was thought of as a struggling endowment. And I've been told it had had years of financial strain in which much of the Parish Committee meetings were taken up with dealing with budget shortfalls.
- There was no lectio divina, no silent retreats, no pastoral prayer or silence in worship, no blessing of graduating seniors, no blessing of the Harvest Moon Fair.
- And there was no distinct mission statement for our community.

I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish together. But the time has come for me to retire from full time parish ministry. You are well positioned to carry on in vitality and engagement.

I love First Parish deeply. I have been so privileged to hold so many of your stories, your sorrows, your joys, your longings. And I readily admit this is hard for me. I have been flooded with love and anticipatory grief. But I am also so very grateful for what we know and share together.

I think of you and give thanks. You have given me the chance to serve and to grow, to make a difference, and to make meaning. How I hope you each can say the same. Thank you.

First Parish in Transition



This Year — Fall 2024 to Summer 2025

We celebrate the 38-year ministry of Rev. Marta Flanagan, our minister for the last 16 years. We gather and preserve her wisdom and expertise as we begin a new era in our congregational life.

The Interim Search Committee finds and selects an interim lead-minister candidate, to be hired by the Parish Committee (our governing board).



Next Year — Fall 2025 to Summer 2026

We welcome our interim lead minister in August 2025.

We take stock of where we are, experiment with new ideas, and discern what we value most in a lead minister.

The congregation elects a Lead Minister Search Committee.



Fall 2026 to Summer 2027

We continue to take stock and explore our needs.

The search committee selects and introduces a candidate, who spends a week meeting members and leading worship. Members then vote on whether to call this candidate.

We celebrate and thank our interim minister.



Fall 2027

We welcome our new settled lead minister!

Overall Institutional Health of First Parish

Three years after a global pandemic that shut down the meetinghouse:

The number of members remains more than 440 over more than ten years. First Parish is the third largest Unitarian Universalist congregation in New England (Concord MA and Providence RI are larger. Burlington VT, Newburyport MA, Portsmouth NH, and Belmont MA are comparable in size.)

The enrollment of children and youth in our religious education programs remains over 100, making us the largest RE program in New England.

Sunday worship attendance this year increased 10% over last year

Average household pledge and total pledge dollars has remained over \$2,900

Staffing Shifts in 2024-2025

Religious Education

Stevie Carmody is our full time Minister of Religious Education. This year was his second year leading our religious education programs. How seamlessly Stevie has led our program after 26 years with Tina Schultz as our Director of Religious education.

This year Rose Sawyer Marsh is completing six years as our part time Youth Program Coordinator. She helped guide our youth through the pandemic and kept First Parish a vital part of their lives. We wish her well as she launches into a new life chapter with her marriage in the fall. A search committee is already reviewing candidates for the position to start in the fall.

Bella began this year as our part time Religious education Assistant. We love Bella's engaging presence!

Office

Ebiere Omoregie began as our Office Manager in April 2024. This year marks her first full year at First Prish. What a fine job she has done navigating the seasonal demands of fall startup, budgeting and stewardship, and tenant leases! Her efficiency and warmth have increased the level of warm hospitality and service at First Parish

In October Ebiere brought Alison Sillers in as our part time Office Associate after Joe Cook's departure. Allison has charmed us all with her can-do attitude.

Music

In June the Parish Committee hired Daniel Parsley, who had been our interim Music Director for six months, to be our settled Music Director. Daniel has brought us Choral Scholars from Boston University as well as an increased number of voices in the choir. Daniel's energy is contagious!

Our Ken Seitz, our Music Director Emeritus, has continued as our accompanist and resident composer. How much joy Ken brings to our worship!

Staff at First Parish Arlington MA, May 2025

Lead Minister	Rev. Marta Flanagan (began 9/2009) (FT: Full Time)
Parish Minister	Rev. Erica Richmond (began 8/2020) (FT) <i>on parental leave from January to May 2025</i>
Adjunct Minister	Rev. Tricia Brennan (0.5 FT) <i>serving First Parish during Rev. Erica Richmond's parental leave</i>
Minister of Religious Education	Rev. Stevie Carmody (began 8/2023) (FT)
Youth Program Coordinator	Rose Sawyer Marsh (began 9/2019) (0.495 FT)
RE Assistant	Bella Jaffe (began 10/2024) (0.25 FT)
Office Administrator	Ebiere Omoregie (began 4/2024) (FT)
Office and Communications Associate	Allison Sillers (began 09/2024) (0.7 FT)
Sexton	Jacqueline De Jesus (began 11/2023) (0.5 FT)
Music Director	Dr. Daniel Parsley (began 11/2023) (0.5 FT)
Accompanist	Kenneth Seitz (9/2018) (0.3 FT) <i>Note: Ken is also our Music Director Emeritus</i>

Note: In addition, since 2017 **Rev. Wendy Page** has been an **Affiliate Minister** serving as an area Hospice Chaplain and is paid by hospice agencies as a member of their staff.

In honor of those who joined as Members this year:

Dorothy Anger
Mags Banasik
Matthew Bellantoni
Larry Berger
Julia Dudley-Kramer

Marina Erulkar
Christopher Helal
Kassandra Howard
Melissa Hower
Erica LeBow

James Leslie
Bodi Luse
Hayley Powers
Anna Richardson
Julie Richardson

Megan Rising
Megan Shand
Paul Sloboda
Stacey Sloboda
Amy Stubblefield

Alex Wang
Debra Wood

Total membership as of May 1, 2025: 443

Core Commitment and Covenants of the Ministers

We began our ministry with a three-day private consultation led by an outside church consultant. Together we reflected on our core commitments in ministry and on the ways we want to work together. It was a deep and rich process that led us to draft the following statement.

Rev. Marta Flanagan, Lead Minister
Rev. Erica Richmond, Parish Minister
August 2020

Our Shared Core Commitments

Our ministry together is grounded in:

- a sense of a Spirit moving within and among us
- service to First Parish, its leaders, and members
- a call to work for justice, both within and beyond the walls of the meetinghouse.

Together we will work and serve; share joy and delight; engage in prayer and devotion.

And in this trying time of pandemic and economic hardship, we will keep before us the grief many are enduring, and will be especially committed to speak and act with tenderness.

In this ministry, we are grateful that we are not alone. We support and are supported by a larger staff team, lay leaders, and volunteers. We are also connected to the community of greater Boston and Unitarian Universalism.

Our Individual Core Commitments

We know too that we bring to our ministry our separate stories, passions, and commitments. We will encourage one another in those pursuits that make our hearts and souls sing.

Of note, Rev. Erica is committed to:

- Lifting up and giving attention to what is urgent; this includes issues of justice, trauma, and grief in our aching world.
- Honoring complexity as a spiritual endeavor -- that many things are true at the same time.
- Wrestling with the harsh realities of our times and leading with hope.
- Companionship with and being led by a Holy Presence in her work and encounters with others.

Marta is committed to:

- Ministering to others in times of death and grief.
- Attending to the outsider, the outcast, the misunderstood, and those people often made absent.
- Fostering spiritual awareness and transformation in others
- Promoting racial justice – made even more pressing post-pandemic.

Our Covenants

Knowing that the ways we are and work together are important, we covenant to:

- Underscore the joys of this work and take delight in the opportunity to work and learn from one another. We will celebrate one another's successes and those of the congregation.
- Speak the truth in love in our work with the congregation, the staff, and one another. We will maintain confidentiality in staff conversations and meetings. We will share pastoral care concerns of those we serve with each other as needed and will inform the congregation of that policy.
- Model direct conversation and discourage triangulation within the congregation. If someone complains to one of us about the other, we will coach that person to be direct with their feedback. We will publicly support each other when issues arise.
- Uphold the freedom of the pulpit, a treasured principle of the liberal religious tradition. We will educate others of this theological foundation.
- Be open to new ideas and learn from one another's approaches and frameworks.
- Recognize differences as a good thing and honor one another's perspectives. We aim for a spirit of playfulness and curiosity when we hold different perspectives.
- When disagreements arise, we will not speak disparagingly or invite others to take sides. We will take time and approach any disagreements with intention.
- Support each other in finding balance in our work and in our lives. This means encouraging one another to take time away from ministerial responsibilities for rest and refreshment.
- Give each other feedback; knowing that we have a shared commitment to growth and to building a partnership of trust and support.

Information about the Ministers

First Parish is served by the elected leaders, volunteers, and staff. First Parish is also served by two full time ministers. Both ministers preach and participate in worship services and are available for pastoral care, weddings, and memorial services.

Rev. Marta Flanagan is the lead minister called by a vote of the congregation in 2009 and is generally called “Marta.” Rev. Erica Richmond is the Parish Minister hired by the Parish Committee in August 2020 and is generally called “Rev. Erica.”

How do I reach a minister?

Both ministers are available by appointment. For personal, spiritual, and pastoral care, you may choose whichever minister with whom you would like to meet. Pastoral conversations are confidential, but the content of conversations shared with one minister may be shared with the other. You can email Marta@firstparish.info or Erica@firstparish.info. In case of emergency, please phone the church office: 781 648 3799.

Who does what?

Each minister serves as a supervisor to other staff members and as the ministerial contact for various groups and committees at First Parish. Each year they will determine which minister will supervise and serve as the ministerial contact for the staff positions, committees, and groups.

Rev. Marta Flanagan will be the ministerial contact for the Parish Committee, the Executive Committee, the Program Council, the Worship Associates, and those groups providing adult programming including STAR and Covenant Groups. She serves as supervisor to Rev. Erica Richmond, Minister of Religious Education Stevie Carmody, Interim Music Director Daniel Parsley, and the Office Manager Ebiere Omoregie.

Rev. Erica Richmond will be the ministerial contact for Lay Ministry, Social Justice, Leadership Development, Stewardship, Membership and Property Committees.

What is their schedule?

Saturday and Sunday: Both ministers leading worship and programs, writing and preparing

Monday: Rev. Marta Flanagan’s Sabbath Day; Rev. Erica Richmond’s writing day. Rev. Erica Richmond is available for emergencies.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: Both Ministers at meetings, appointments, and programs

Friday: Rev Erica Richmond’s Sabbath Day; Rev. Marta Flanagan’s writing day. Rev. Marta Flanagan is available for emergencies.

What About the Committee on Ministry?

A Committee on Ministry serves as an ambassador between a minister and a congregation. The Committee on Ministry will continue to evaluate and support the ministry of the congregation working with the two ministers as a team. You are welcome to give feedback and suggestions to the members of the Committee on Ministry: COM@firstparish.info

Ministerial Contact List, 2024-2025

Rev. Marta Flanagan is the ministerial contact for the following committees and staff:

Office and Building: Office Manager, Office Associate, Sexton
(and Human Resources and Property Committees)

Religious Education: MRE, Youth Program Coordinator
RE Committee and YAC

Music: Director
Accompanist (and Music Committee)

Parish Committee and Executive Committee,
Finance Committee, Trustees of Permanent Funds Worship Associates (and Ushers),

Program Council

Adult Programming (STAR Covenant Groups, Ferry Beach)

Rev. Erica Richmond is the ministerial contact for the following committees and staff:

Lay Ministry (Prayer Shawl and Wider Network of Care)

Social Justice
(including the working groups & Racial Justice Coordinating Committee)

Leadership Development

Stewardship Committee

Membership Committee

Shared Ministry

All other committees and groups may contact either minister as needed.

Report: Office Manager, Ebiere Omoregie

Office Manager, Ebiere Omoregie

Contact: officemanager@firstparish.info

Highlights of the Past Year:

On April 6th, 2024, I officially joined the wonderful staffing team at First Parish, and yes, you read that correctly—I've already exceeded my one-year anniversary with all of you! It's hard to believe how quickly time has flown. This milestone also reminds me that I began my employment during Peak Season, right at the start of the Annual Meeting preparation. What a journey it has been so far!

As we all know, the first year in any new position comes with a steep learning curve. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work closely with our Treasurer, Carolyn Hodges, and Bookkeeper, Liz McKersie, ensuring that First Parish's finances remain on track. I've also collaborated closely with our Property Committee to make sure that all annual inspections and routine services are completed, ensuring the smooth operation of our campus.

Additionally, I've worked alongside our dedicated lay leaders and committee members, and I'm grateful for their support and guidance. As Office Manager, I report to Senior Minister Marta Flanagan, and we meet weekly to discuss ongoing action items and any office-related tasks that need oversight. The Office Manager also supervises our wonderful Office Associate, Allison Sillers, who joined us in September 2024. She has been an incredible addition to the team, enhancing our communications through the website, e-bulletin, Sunday Teaser, providing support to committees as needed, preparing and updating Order of Worship, editing and uploading worship services to our YouTube channel and more. Our Building Sexton, Jaqueline DeJesus, has done an outstanding job ensuring that all of our housekeeping needs are met. Jaqueline continues to service the campus four times a week, as well as on an as-needed basis.

This past year has been one of change and transition, with staffing shifts and evolving job responsibilities. We've navigated through all of it while managing to stay on top of our responsibilities. In May 2024, the wall between the May Room and the lower level of the Parish House was removed, creating a spacious, open area for use. The office staff powered through our very first "Harvest Moon Fair," the holiday rush, and all the annual events that make First Parish so special.

Currently, the office is focused on gaining a deeper understanding of all our systems and exploring ways to improve and enhance them. Stay tuned for what's next!

Staff Covenant

FIRST PARISH ARLINGTON MA September 2021

We choose to be a liberal religious community, welcoming to all.
We encourage each other on our spiritual journeys,
Support one another through the changes in our lives,
And challenge the excesses and injustices of our time.
Called to love and upheld by joy, we live our faith.

—Adopted by the members of First Parish Arlington MA March 28, 2010

We, the staff, covenant to support and serve the mission of First Parish.
In the service of this mission, we set these ideals before us.

AN ETHIC OF SERVICE

- We will practice responsiveness to one another and the community. We will strive to respond to communications promptly even if simply letting another know we will be providing a fuller response at a later date.
- We will strive to avoid surprises, informing one another of issues as they develop, giving one another as much opportunity as possible to prepare the wisest response to a given situation.
- Whenever the community gathers in large numbers, especially on Sunday morning, we turn outward to serve them.

CARE AND COMPASSION ESPECIALLY WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN NEED

- We will speak truths to one another in love.
- We will respect and protect the confidentiality and trust of those we serve, keeping confidence within the circle of other staff members.
- We will respond swiftly upon learning of the death of someone in our community.

HEALTHY RELATIONS WITH ALL

- We will practice being calm and present to one another and to others (“non anxious presence”).
- We will encourage all to speak directly to others and will avoid triangulating or being triangulated in our dealings with one another and others.
- When emotions or conflicts arise among ourselves or with others in the community, we will avoid email and speak face to face, or online or on the phone.

KINDNESS AND SUPPORT OF ONE ANOTHER

- We will explain and clarify our and other’s roles and responsibilities. At times this will involve directing or redirecting people with a given issue or concern to the right staff person.
- Out of respect for the efforts of our colleagues and for efficiency’s sake, we will strive to use protocols and procedures established by staff before asking for information or assistance.
- We will practice patience and forgiveness especially with one another
- We will err on over communicating rather than under communicating with one another.
- We will practice flexibility and understanding especially in managing the impact of uncertainty.

- We will support one another in leading a balanced life, supporting one another in setting boundaries on their availability.
- We will aim to handle interpersonal conflicts directly, using appropriate channels of support if necessary.

Rev. Marta Flanagan, Lead Minister
Rev. Erica Richmond, Parish Minister
Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious
Education
Rose Sawyer Marsh, Youth Program
Coordinator
Bella Jaffe, Religious Education Program
Assistant

Daniel Parsley, Music Director
Kenneth Seitz, Accompanist and Music
Director Emeritus
Ebire Omoregie, Office Administrator
Allison Sillers, Office and Communications
Associate
Jacqueline De Jesus, Sexton

Highlights in the Life of First Parish since 2009

2009-2010

- Marta Flanagan installed as minister; Joan Dyer begins as Office Administrator
- A renewed Lay Ministry program launched
- Begin “Embrace the Darkness” worship service and senior blessings
- Tina Schultz is serving in 15th year as Director of Religious Education, Laura Prichard in 7th year, Marcie Griffith in 3rd year as Youth Program Coordinator

2010-2011

- Worship Associate program launched
- Congregation votes to become an environmentally responsible “Green Sanctuary”
- Lectio Divina programming is introduced

2011-2012

- “Action for Economic Justice” begins as a social justice working group in response to Occupy Wall Street
- First Trip to Partner Church in Gagy, Romania

2012-2013

- First website launched
- Capital campaign raises 1.9 million pledge dollars toward renovations

2013-2014

- Solar panels installed
- Ken Seitz serves as Interim Music Director after departure of Laura Prichard • Rev. Ken Sawyer is Sabbatical Minister during Marta Flanagan’s 4-month sabbatical
- Marcie Griffith completes 7 years as Youth Program Coordinator

2014-2015

- Capital campaign construction and rededication of renovated Parish areas
- A “Black Lives Matter” banner goes up on meetinghouse lawn after a grand jury vote not to indict Darren Wilson of killing Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri
- Worship Survey reveals members are evenly split between humanism and theism
- First database created (REALM)
- Jonathan Brennand begins as Music Director
- Sarah Napoline serves as Youth Program Coordinator

2015-2016

- Stewardship Campaign adopts theme of “Turning Outward”
- Social Justice Working Groups sponsor numerous programs on classism and on mass incarceration
- Executive Assistant half time position established to assist minister
- Stevie Carmody becomes Youth Program Coordinator

2016-2017

- More than 100 members attended the Women’s March in Boston the day after the inauguration of President Trump
- “ArCS,” initiated by First Parish members in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, begins work hosting asylum seekers
- The Parish Committee establishes the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee
- “Action Sunday” launched as part of “Turning Outward”

2017-2018

- 10 percent of the congregation participates in racial justice programming including

“Unpacking Whiteness”

- Congregation ordains both Wendy Page and Aisha Ansano as ministers
- Stevie Carmody completes 3 years of service as Youth Program Coordinator

2018-2019

- Revs. Jeanne and Olav Nieuwejaar serve as sabbatical co-ministers while Marta Flanagan takes a 4-month sabbatical featuring a trip to South Africa
- Aisha Ansano serves as Youth Program Coordinator
- Campaign for a second minister start up fund raises more \$200,000 in pledges

2019-2020

- A global pandemic closes the meetinghouse on March 13.
- worship and activities begin online.
- Chloe Briede serves as our first intern in more than 15 years
- Rose Sawyer Marsh begins serving as Youth Program Coordinator
- Congregation ordains Stevie Carmody to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry
- Parish Committee hires Rev. Erica Richmond as Parish Minister to join Marta Flanagan, Lead Minister, starting in August 2020

2020-2021

- A pandemic moves worship and all activities online or outdoors through summer 2021. From the sanctuary Foodlink distributes food to local food pantries.
- To meet the need for human connection amidst the isolation of a pandemic, adult programming opportunities increase. Attendance in worship and adult programs are stronger than in previous years. Pledging for 2021-22 increases by ten percent.
- The death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, sparks demonstrations and greater awareness of police abuses. First Parish hosts demonstrations and related education programming.
- Rev. Erica Richmond begins as Parish Minister joining Marta Flanagan as Lead Minister.
- Sara Hidalgo begins as Office Manager.

2021-2022

- We begin hybrid worship on November 14th, moving from being strictly online to having some folks worship incarnate and some who have continued via Zoom.
- The ongoing need for flexibility and support continues as the impact of the pandemic remains unceasing
- Adult programming and justice-based initiatives continue to strengthen and become a focal point of the congregation's energies.
- Rev. Marta Flanagan goes on Sabbatical from January 1st-May 15th.
- During that time, Rev. Erica Richmond steps into the role of acting lead minister and Rev. Marc Fredette joins the team as a part-time adjunct Sabbatical minister.

2022-2023

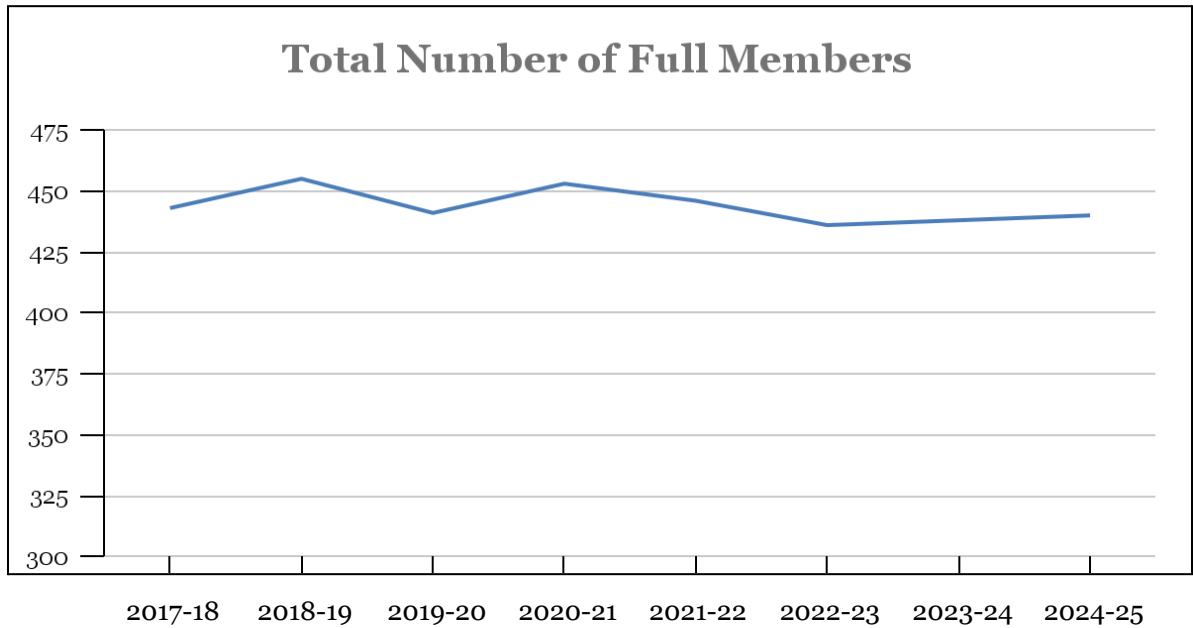
- Tina Schultz announces her retirement as Director of Religious Education beginning June 2023. Tina is celebrated for her 27 years as DRE
- The Parish Committee hires Rev. Stevie Carmody as Minister of Religious Education to begin in August 2023

2023-2024

- Ebiere Omoregie begins as Office Manager in April 2024.

First Parish by the Numbers 2024-2025

Membership



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
number of full (non associate) members as of May 1	440	438	436		446	453	441	455	443
number of full members who joined this program year	25	16	7		19	11	12	18	21
number of youth who joined as associate members this program year	9	0	0		1	0	0	0	0
percent change in membership over prior year	-1.59%	-0.46%	-0.46%		2.24%	1.55%	-2.72%	3.08%	-2.64%

Sunday Worship Attendance

Average total Sunday attendance increased by 10.5% over last year
(Median attendance increased by 6.2%)

Average attendance in the Sanctuary increased 10.7% over last year
(Median in-person attendance increased by 3.0%)

Average Sunday attendance this year exceeded the Pre-Covid average by 3.9%!

Pre-Covid (average Sunday attendance 2017-2020): 238

COVID Zoom only (2020-2021): 200

Average total Attendance 2022-2023: 210

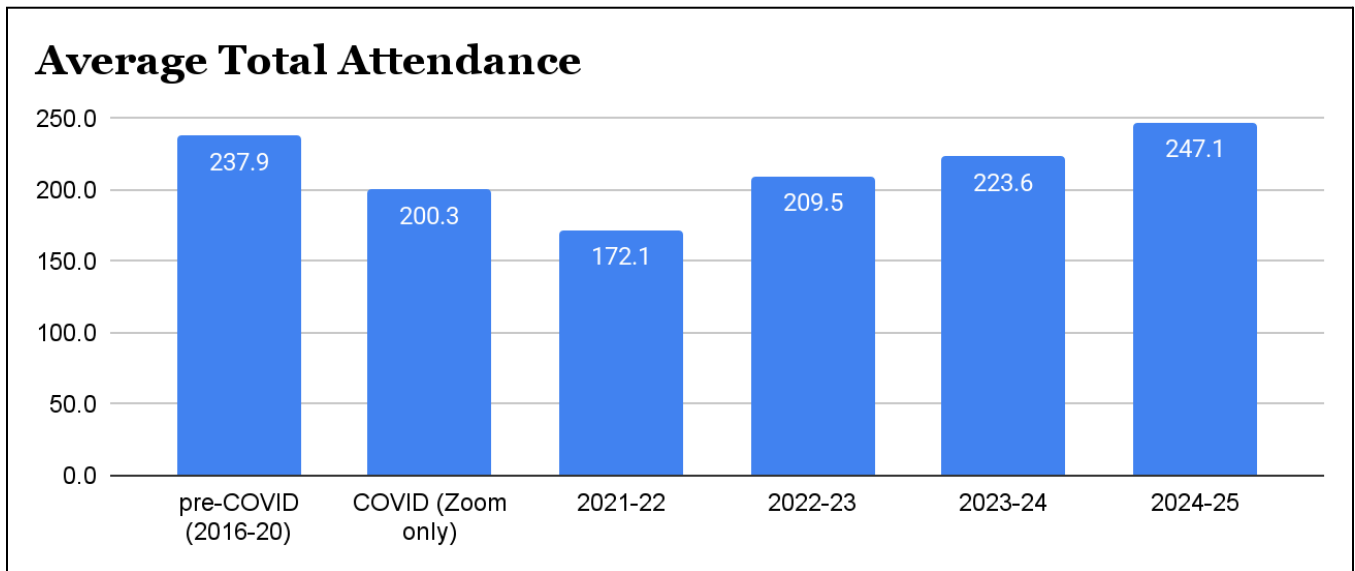
Average total attendance 2023-2024: 224

Average total attendance 2024-2025: 247

Sunday Attendance 2024-2025

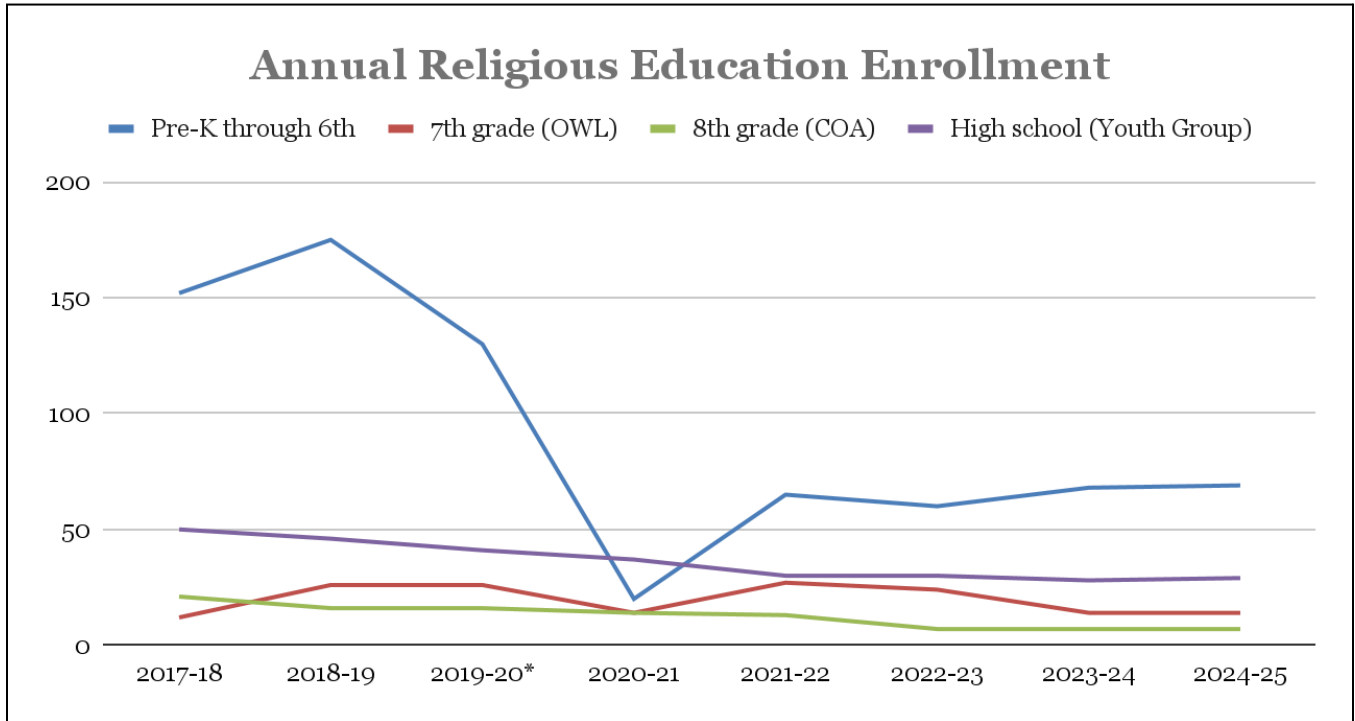
Total attendance numbers are the sum of in-person attendance plus online attendance.
 Online attendance is the number of screens staying 30 minutes or longer.

	Sanctuary	Online	Total	% Online
Sept. 2024	235	52	287	18%
October	163	51	213	24%
November	210	67	277	24%
December	155	52	207	25%
January 2025	192	61	253	24%
February	95	105	200	52%
March	208	60	268	22%
April	217	59	276	21%
Average over the last eight months:	187	60	247	24%
The same 8 months last year (2023-2024)	160	54	214	25%



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
average Sunday attendance	243	238	219	187	172	210	224	247
average Sunday attendance as a % of total membership	55.2%	54.3%	50.2%	41.9%	38.0%	47.6%	49.2%	55.8%

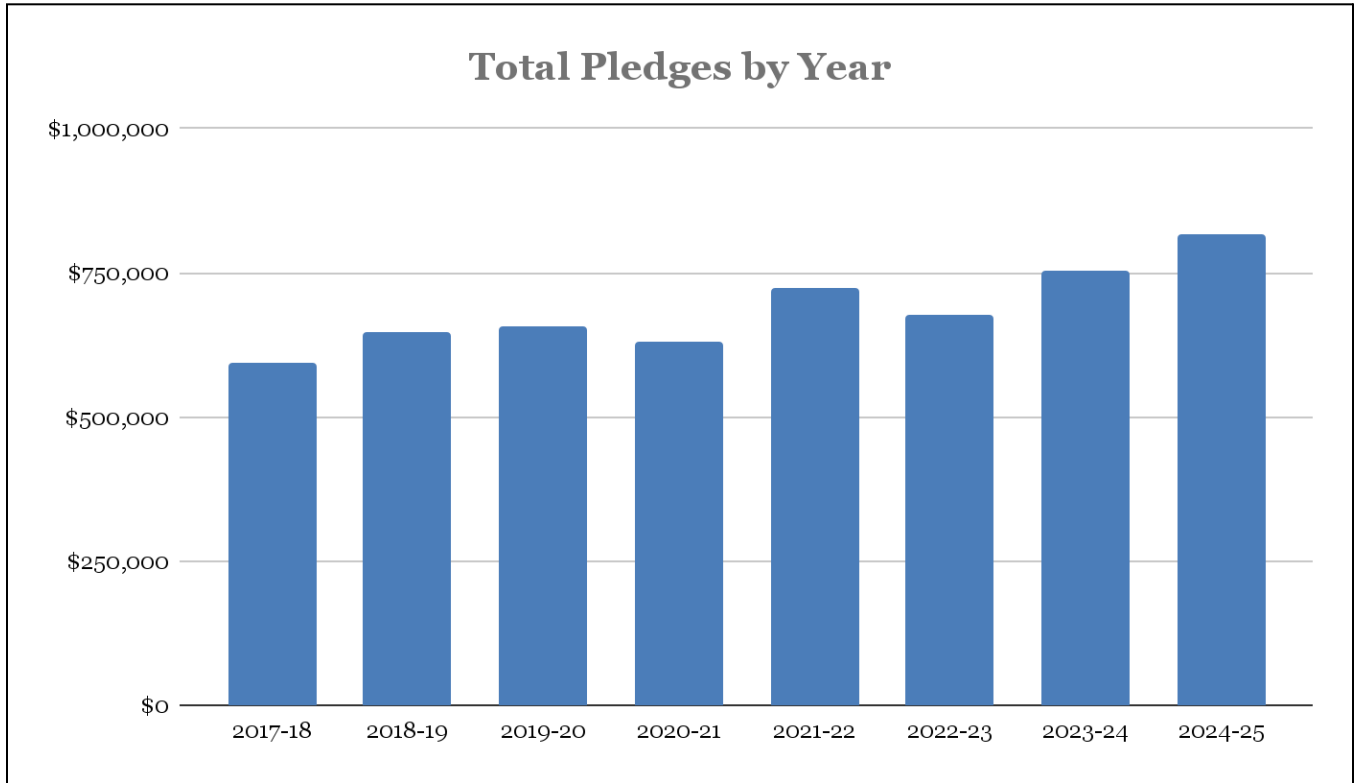
Religious Education



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
number of children Pre-K through 6th grade registered for Sunday morning RE	152	175	130	20	65	60	68
number of 7th graders in OWL class (Winter/Spring)	12	26	26	14	27	24	14
number of 8th graders in Coming of Age class (Spring)	21	16	16	14	13	7	7
number of high school students in the Youth Group	50	46	41	37	30	30	28

First Parish Notables

- Staff Continue to be paid at fair compensation levels recommended by the UUA
- First Parish continues to contribute its "fair share" to support the UUA



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Pledges	\$593,000	\$647,000	\$656,415	\$631,732	\$722,814	\$675,939	\$752,793	\$815,153
% Change from Prior Year	12.0%	9.0%	1.5%	-3.8%	14.4%	-6.5%	11.4%	8.3%
Average Pledge	\$2,141	\$2,254	\$2,267	\$2,977	\$2,707	\$2,901	\$2,929	\$2,964
# Households pledging	277	287	290	260	267	233	257	275

Program Reports

Report: Minister of Religious Education, Rev. Stevie Carmody

Contact: MRE@firstparish.info

What a year it's been in First Parish's Religious Education Program for Children & Youth! As we take stock of our thriving program, I report below about a year marked by **collaboration**, **creativity**, and **commitment**. The Religious Education (RE) program found new ways to collaborate with other ministries in our congregation. We continued to experiment and explore together in many ways, and gave our young people the space to do that themselves. And we especially honor the long-term commitment of many of our volunteer and staff leaders in making this all happen.

First Parish's Sunday morning program serves, on average, **41 children (nursery - grade 7)** on non-holiday weekends, and we have about 80 children registered in the program. We continue to have grade-based classes, co-taught by volunteers within our community (you can read their names below). Some program highlights:

- The **Grade 6/7 Neighboring Faiths program** visited new communities, and returned to others, including: St. Camillus of Arlington (Catholic), Temple Shir Tikvah (Reform Judaism), Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (Muslim), Arlington Street Church (UU), Shivalaya Temple of Greater Boston (Hindi), Gurudwara Sikh Sangat Boston (Sikh), St Paul's African Methodist Episcopal (AME).
- The **Grade 4/5 class** explored the Stories from the Hebrew Bible curriculum, culminating in a presentation of the Story of Jonah to the congregation on March 23rd. This class is also trialing a new play-based, UU values curriculum this spring.
- The **Grade 2/3 class** learned a lot about different religions and cultures through an adapted Holidays and Holy Days curriculum, including: Three Kings Day, Nowruz, Mardi Gras, Holi, Purim, Passover, Eid al-Fatr, and Buddha's Birthday.
- The **Grade K/1 class** and **Pre-K class** both used curricula that helped our youngest learn what it means to be part of First Parish as a community, and build values of compassion, caring, and kindness.

Alongside the regular term class, we have had opportunities to collaborate with other ministries of First Parish, with some great successes, often with our **"All-Together" Sunday morning programs**. In October, we learned about indigenous culture with a focus on the value of Reciprocity. In November we planted daffodils with the Property Committee. In December, the children's holiday choir performed, in collaboration with the Music Committee. Additionally, the Lay Ministry Committee helped the children send care packages to members of our community we don't see regularly. Our Art Show Committee helped youth contribute to an art-show about Climate Change in the winter, and in the spring, the children made a "Bouquet of Wow!" to contribute to the congregational art show to say goodbye to Marta.

First Parish's Sunday Evening programs—Youth Group (high school), Our Whole Lives (OWL) comprehensive sexuality education for Grade 7-8, and Coming of Age (grade 8)—continue to engage our teens in living their values in the world. See Rose's report for a full overview of the Youth Program. In OWL, our collaboration with Kahal B'raira, a local Humanist Jewish congregation, continues—and our cohort also welcomed a few UU teens from neighboring congregations. To navigate this conglomeration, we spent three sessions in March just doing community building before the proper program began. In COA, our amazing mentors helped six eighth graders explore how they want to be part of First Parish and approach their world with care, curiosity, and joy.

Overall, including morning and evening programming, we serve, **on average, 66 children and youth** on a typical Sunday, with a total registered number of 125 children and youth.

Supporting all this work is the elected, volunteer **Religious Education Committee**, which meets monthly, oversees the program alongside me, and offers valuable guidance and leadership in many parts of our program. This year, the committee set a mission and vision (see the committee report for details), set a framework for its approach to Justice Education, helped engage parents/families, reviewed curriculum, and refined our volunteer support systems. With this annual meeting, the committee says goodbye to **Anthony Fernandez** and **Ellen Robie**—long-time committee members who especially went above and beyond in helping the program sustain through the pandemic. We honor their work, and wish them ease!

Our program has also thrived from the awesome support of **First Parish staff**. From Allison helping schedule us, Jacquelyn sweeping up errant goldfish crackers, and Ebiere running background checks; to Marta and Rev. Erica collaborating on intergenerational worship, Ken composing interstitial music for our Solstice play, and Dr. Parsley helping relaunch a choir program for kids—we are so lucky to be nested within an awesome staff team.

Of course, our Religious Education staff deserve special praise in this report. **Lia McDonald Meteer** and **Lauren McNeill** continue to be steady presences in our nursery room. In October 2024, First Parish hired **Bella Jaffe (they/them)** as our new **Religious Education Assistant**. Bella, with their artistic gifts and creative approach to supporting young people, has thrived this year! Many of the incredible artistic creations were created or facilitated by Bella. We're glad to say Bella plans to return next year!

Our beloved **Youth Program Coordinator, Rose Sawyer Marsh**, ends her tenure at First Parish this June, after six exemplary years in the role. Rose's stalwart commitment to centering youth voices and leadership is admirable. Rose's flexible, enthusiastic, and care-filled disposition helps our high schoolers thrive. It's a credit to Rose that over 40 alumni and friends of Youth Group came to our youth group holiday alumni party this year. We wish Rose well in her next career steps and family transitions! Hiring for Rose's replacement is underway.

A thank you to the many volunteers that make this program possible:

The **Religious Education Committee**, including Betsy Carlton-Gysan (chair), Ellen Robie, Anthony Fernandez, Sharon Jacobson, Janis Fleishman (treasurer), & Kat Cass.

The many **Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.) Facilitators**, including Lidia Prunte & Ruby Kinnamon (middle school O.W.L. 2024); Lidia Prunte, Rowan Wheeler, & Sara Galantowicz (middle school O.W.L. 2025); and our back-up facilitators Wendy Fields, Melanie Cohn-Hopwood, Stevie Carmody, and David Whitford.

Youth Group Adult Advisors Bill Licea-Kane, Andrew Kobayashi, Paul Franzosa, Emily Randall, & Cathy Slesnick.

The **Coming of Age Mentors** Carolyn Hodges, Pamela Baldwin, Phil Speare, & Peter Heller, and the C.O.A. **Writing Coaches** Sara Whitford and Laura Speare.

The Sunday morning teachers—Nursery: Lauren McNeill, Lia McDonald Meteer; Pre-K: Amy Hadley, Carol Lewis, Ellen Kloss, Barbara Grim, Katie Limb (middle school helper), Tali Avery, & Melissa Naylor; K/1: Gail Page, Francis O’Donovan, Mike Bright, Julie Cooper, Martha Pereli, Julius Pereli, & Emily Balkam; 2/3: Claire Kitzmiller, Jason Stillerman, James Brooks, Cale Pennington, Sanjay Newton, & Kate Guilbault; 4/5: Wendy Page, Ellen Robie, Cal Robie, Alan Linov, Veronika McDonald King, Francis O’Donovan, & Tom McGraw; 6/7: Carolyn White, Eric Segal, Eric Breck, Tara Rosenberger, Beth Billings, & Erica LeBow.

High school and middle school teens **Fiona Baxter, Cal Robie, Nate Robie, and Katie Limb** assisted in supporting the program on Sunday mornings and in organizational capacities.

And the many other volunteers helping with “**All Together**” **Sundays, Time for All Ages, Classroom Supports, Parents Night Out, and Substitute Teaching.**

Warmly,



Rev. Stevie Carmody
Minister of Religious Education

Standing Committees' Reports

Finance Committee

Contact: finance@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: The Finance Committee prepares the Parish budget for the Parish Committee and helps the Parish Committee evaluate and finalize the budget.

Chair: Lissa McBurney

Committee members: Lissa McBurney (second term ends 2027)
Sid Slobodkin (first term ends 2025)

EX OFFICIO MEMBER: Carolyn Hodges, Treasurer (second 3-year term ends 2027)

Major activities:

- collected budget input from Committees and staff
- reviewed input with Ministerial staff and Executive committee of Parcom
- prepared draft budget for Stewardship committee
- modified budget based on Stewardship campaign and other changes and worked with Exec and Parish committees to draft a final budget for annual meeting vote.

Challenges or improvement opportunities: small committee (of one); outdated spreadsheets

2025-26 Priorities:

- Prepare for Treasurer transition
- recruit for committee and bring new members up to speed
- build a coordinated process with HR committee to provide updated annually salary bands and other personnel info as needed
- create more robust spreadsheets and forms to assist in gathering and communicating budget information.

Human Resource Committee

Contact: humanresources@firstparish.info

Mission: The mission of the Human Resources Committee (HRC) is to create and promote appropriate human resources policies and practices that support healthy relationships between and among staff, volunteers and congregants, and maintain best practices as recommended by the UUA. It works proactively to promote healthy practices, provides advice and support during the hiring and departures of staff, and provides assistance to supervisors in challenging situations. Throughout its activities, the HRC is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in the First Parish of Arlington hiring practices.

Chair: Kay Snowden

Committee members: Lauren Newton (2nd term ends 2025), Kay Snowden (1 year extension to fill a vacant position ends 2025), Sara Galantowicz (1st term ends 2027) and Sara Whitford (1 year appointment ends 2025; eligible for election for 2 additional years, ending 2027).

Major Activities

The revised Employee Handbook was approved by the Parish Committee on August 27, 2024. Many sections were updated, notably changes in employee benefits to align with UUA recommendations and employer practices in this area. First Parish now participates in the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave program.

Committee members conducted “check-in” meetings with most staff members and ministers at First Parish to hear about their work experiences and answer any questions they have. These meetings have been summarized and shared with the ministers and with the Parish Committee.

We have worked with the payroll team at First Parish to set up better tracking of leave time, ensure proper classification of employees, and review changes in payroll.

We have responded to inquiries from staff regarding leave and benefits.

We reviewed the draft letters of agreement with ministers filling in for Rev. Erica’s leave and for the interim minister.

We assisted in reviewing job descriptions and the hiring process for new staff.

Challenges and Priorities

We have recommendations gleaned through past exit interviews and our check-in meetings with current staff to be implemented.

We have compiled some training materials around topics suggested by staff and will work to make those available. As always, fitting into the schedules of our busy staff, particularly in a period of transition and new leadership, is a challenge.

We want to build on our conversations with staff this year and either continue with check-ins or develop different ways to solicit staff feedback, so that we can build and maintain a healthy work environment.

Leadership Development Committee

Contact: leadership@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: To encourage and facilitate participation in First Parish committees, support our lay leaders by promoting leadership development throughout our congregation, and nominate individuals to fill vacancies on standing committees and as parish officers prior to the Annual Meeting.

Co-Chairs: Kiki Giatis (2nd term ends 2027), Marie Meteer (1st term ends 2025)

Major activities (bulleted list):

- Leadership Development Roundtable (October 2024)
- Honored Rookie Luncheon (February 2025)
- Mini LDC Roundtable on the Interim Ministry Process (April 2025)
- Informal thank you gathering for outgoing standing committee members (May 2025)
- Participate in the Parish Committee initiative to develop a skills database in Realm.
- Track standing committee members and terms for FY26 to help prepare the ballot for the Annual Meeting.
- Connecting with First Parish constituents to help community members find volunteer opportunities and opportunities to connect with the larger community.

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- Tailor our programming to communicate with lay leaders during the Interim Ministry process.
- Expand the circle of First Parish constituents interested in finding volunteer opportunities.
- Continue to work with those that are updating Realm both for skills and standing committee assignments.
- Staffing LDC.

2025-2026 Priorities (bulleted list):

- Continue to offer the programs for lay leaders that will support them during our first year with an Interim Minister.
- Networking + ensuring all standing committees are supported.
- Recruit members to LDC.

Membership Committee

Contact: membership@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: Using the philosophy of a “ministry of the welcome table” and the skills of radical welcome, we greet and warmly welcome visitors to First Parish and help them learn about our community. We guide congregants on the path to membership, supporting and encouraging them as they find ways to engage and connect with their new congregation.

Chair: Amy Anderson

Committee members (include term end dates):

Amy Anderson (first term ends 2025)
Christian Collins (first term ends 2025)
Lois Fine (first term ends 2027)
Mary McCartney (second term extended 2024-2025)
Gail Page (first term ends 2025)
Jerry Silberman (first term ends 2027)

Rev. Erica Richmond and Rev. Tricia Brennan have provided valuable ministerial support for our work.

Major Activities

Membership Committee Development:

- Our September retreat, facilitated by Rev. Erica, focused on ways to promote a culture of radical welcome. We reviewed the mechanics/logistics of the welcome table, and set priorities for the year.
- We moved our monthly meetings to Zoom to make attendance easier.

Community Communications:

- Hosted a Summer Potluck in August
- Harvest Moon Fair
 - Staffed a Membership table to greet visitors to the Fair and share information about First Parish
- Bulletin Board
 - Displayed pictures of new members
 - Asked the congregation, “In trying times, what ties us together?”
- Holiday Order of Service insert
 - Colorful fliers welcomed newcomers to First Parish.

Welcome Table:

- At least one Membership Committee member staffed the Welcome Table each Sunday before and after worship.
- Name tags:
 - In addition to supplying disposable name tags for newcomers, we manage requests for new permanent name tags that are then created by Allison Sillers.
- “Friends of Membership”

- To fully staff the Welcome Table with two people per service, we asked committee leaders to sign up to work with us on a Sunday or two. In addition to improving our ability to engage with visitors, this approach gives leaders of other committees a window into how visitors show up.
- Connection Cards
 - We offer visitors the opportunity to complete a Connection Card, and we follow up with a personalized welcome email.
 - We provide a similar, personal welcome to those who fill out a Connection Card online at the First Parish website.
 - We continue to maintain a tracking document to ensure follow up with connection card completers and to understand the needs/desires of visitors.

New UU 2.0:

- An iteration of the Deepening Connections program created by Bonnie Zimmer and Susan Moore, New UU 2.0 tried to help new and “new-ish” members of First Parish feel more connected to the First Parish community, which can be hard in a congregation as large and bustling as ours.
- The program has featured four drop-in sessions scheduled after worship as an alternative to coffee hour in the vestry. The sessions offered structured activities designed to help people share more deeply than coffee hour conversations sometimes allow.
- In addition, we have posted colorful fliers bearing the message “Come, come, whoever you are” to highlight upcoming activities or programs that are open to all. We have sent similar mailings to newer members and those who had filled out a Connection Card in recent months. Most of these programs and activities have been highlighted in the eBulletin or the FPConnections Board, but by highlighting them in a targeted mailing to these members, we have sought to provide a special welcome to newer congregants.

Events:

- New Members
 - With Rev. Erica and Stevie in the fall and Stevie and Rev. Tricia in the spring, the Membership Committee offered two New UU courses, giving newcomers an opportunity to reflect on and share their spiritual journeys, learn about First Parish and Unitarian Universalism. Each session ends with an opportunity to sign the membership book.
 - 14 people participated in the fall 2024 New UU course; 10 participated in the spring 2025 course. In all, 17 who took New UU this program signed the Membership book upon completion or soon thereafter.
 - 7 others signed the membership book after a meeting with either Marta or Tricia, for a total of 24 new members this program year.
- Coffee with the minister
 - On two occasions, one fall and one later winter, we offered congregants a chance to sit with Marta for coffee or tea, snacks, and casual conversation. Around 25 people took the opportunity to join one or the other of these sessions.
- New Member Ceremony
 - We recognized and welcomed 23 new members during a worship service and at a reception afterward.

- We offered tokens of welcome—chalice pins and a copy of *Love at the Center*—as well as a copy of Reverend Charles Grady’s *Arlington’s First Parish: A History*, provided by the Women’s Alliance.

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- We would love to incorporate some diversity into our group.
- Our committee is not large enough to fully and regularly staff the welcome table. The “friends of membership” is helping, and it can be expanded.
- Developing a workable and environmentally friendly way to manage name tags remains a problem. By encouraging members to use permanent name tags, we can reduce the waste of handwritten name tags that are used once.

2025-2026 Priorities:

- As we begin a period of ministerial change and congregational discernment, we will continue to warmly welcome newcomers and joyously advertise all that is vibrant, steadfast, and good about our congregation.
- We will seek to plan activities with and for younger adults to help strengthen their connection with each other and the FP community.
- We hope to draw in more volunteers to be Friends of the Welcome table and train them to help offer a radical and inclusive welcome.
- We will continue to be a resource to all our new members and to help them become more involved (or stay involved) in the life of First Parish.

Property Committee

Contact: property@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission:

The Property Committee is tasked to maintain and enhance the First Parish buildings and grounds, making First Parish an inviting and safe environment with minimal footprint on the planet. The Committee is responsible for planning, coordinating, problem-solving, budgeting and implementing projects associated with campus property needs. Committee members also do many maintenance tasks themselves, ranging from routine lightbulb changing to complex and unique repairs.

Chair: Greg Ruccio

Vice Chair: <open>

Committee members:

- Greg Ruccio (2nd term ends June 2025)
- David Dreyfus (2nd term ends June 2027)
- Lori Kenshaft (1st term ends June 2026)
- Mara Prentis (1st term ends June 2027)
- Jay Leslie (1st term end June 2027)
- Steve Pillemer (1st term ends June 2028)
- Helen Rasmussen (1st term ends June 2028)

Major activities:

- Members logged over 100 hours working on the property
- Replaced hot water heater
- Abated termite infestation
- Installed rain barrel
- Replaced downspouts on Parish House
- Repaired Vestry floor
- Mapped nearby bike racks
- Continued to compile and consolidate Property knowledge in Google Docs
- Cleared snow and ice and salted after winter storms
- Mowed grass and trimmed trees and shrubs
- Engaged wider group of fall and spring First Parish Clean-It/Fix-It events
- Fixed this and that: repaired trash shed, wall base, old wiring, outlet and switch covers, ceiling tiles, floor transitions, roof leaks, thermostats, exterior lights, weather stripping
- Generally repaired and maintained plumbing, heating, A/C, ventilation, lighting, doors, alarm system, windows, and grounds

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- Need to identify a new chair & vice-chair
- Members are spread thin by combined pressures of urgent repair needs, overall planning and organization, and contractor identification, evaluation, and job management.

2023-2024 Priorities:

- Investigate Vestry ceiling replacement
- Investigate Balcony and Tobey Lounge carpet replacement
- Investigate Tobey Lounge glass window replacement

Religious Education Committee

Contact: re@firstparish.info

Vision: A religious education program that nurtures children and youth to become adults who are faithful to themselves, their communities, their values, and their spiritual journeys.

Mission: To nourish and support First Parish's children on their journeys to adulthood through community engagement, living of Unitarian Universalist values, participatory education, spiritual and personal growth, and religious literacy.

Chair: Betsy Carlton-Gysan (first term ends 2026)

Committee members:

- Ellen Robie
- Anthony Fernandez (second term ends 2025)
- Janis Fleishman (treasurer) (first term ends 2026)
- Sharon Jacobson (first term ends 2026)
- Kat Cass (first term ends 2027)

Major activities:

- Continuing to support & oversee the religious education program for nursery through high school.
- Setting the mission, vision, and priorities of the RE program overall.
- Supporting parents and family involvement in the wider FP community
- Updating RE program curriculum (year one: Grade 4/5 curriculum review) and setting a framework for Justice Education in the program

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- Recruitment of volunteers further in advance for better training and support
- Sharing space with our tenant in RE wing
- Upcoming transitions for the Youth Program with Rose's departure.

Successes

- Welcomed our new RE Assistant, Bella Jaffe
- Steady enrollment and involvement of children and families
- Collaborations with other committees (Lay ministry, music, social justice)

2025-2026 Priorities:

- Welcome new RE Committee members and onboard a new Youth Program Coordinator
- Continue ongoing curriculum review and update
- Support parents and families involvement in wider First Parish community
- Continue to refine volunteer support systems.

Social Justice Committee

Contact: socialjustice@firstparish.info

Purpose of Committee:

The Social Justice Committee (SJC) is the primary hub for pursuing the mission of the overall social justice program to “provide leadership, support, and coordination to the social justice endeavors of First Parish.” SJC takes the lead in coordinating and resourcing topic-focused working groups, which currently are the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee, Indigenous Justice Working Group, the Climate Action Working Group, the Defending Democracy Working Group, and the Working Group on Peace & Justice in Israel-Palestine. We vet proposals for establishment of new working groups, respond to requests for funding and event co-sponsorships, and occasionally organize events that are outside the scope of any working group. In addition, we are responsible for the annual Pie Palace fundraiser, the annual Living Our Faith and Shinn worship services, the Giving First (plate collection sharing) program, and responses to emergent issues related to social justice.

Committee Membership: Ellen Leigh, Joanne Pohl, Melissa Berczuk, Anne Ehlert, Tish Miller, and Alan Linov (chair).

- CHAIR: Alan Linov (second term ends 2025)
- Melissa Berczuk (first term ends 2026)
- Anne Ehlert (first term ends 2026) Ellen Leigh (first term ends 2025)
- Tish Miller (first term ends 2027)
- Joanne Pohl (first term ends 2025)

Task groups: A portion of SJC responsibilities are handled by task groups for the Pie Palace, Giving First, worship, and emergent issues. Each task group includes one or more SJC members. Others that have served on a task group this year are Adam MacNeill, Kate Tranquada, Anne Goodwin, Maureen Dolan, Cathy Modica, Elizabeth Hunter, Betsy Carlton-Gysan, and Rainer Dressler.

Social Justice Program Council: The purpose of this council is to improve coordination of the social justice program and to include working group leaders in discussion of issues affecting the direction of the program as a whole. The council includes SJC members, representatives of the working groups, representatives of ArCS Cluster (a justice-related group outside SJC), and Rev. Erica Richmond.

Congregational partnership with UU Mass Action: SJC is in the third year of a congregational partnership with UU Mass Action. Our partnership enables us to enrich our social justice program, to broaden its reach, and to nurture relationships with other UUs and with organizations allied with UUMA. The partnership entails commitments between the organizations, to be reviewed and renewed annually.

Activities:

1. Pie Palace - With the leadership of the Pie Palace Task Group, we conducted the traditional Arlington Town Day pie sale to raise funds to support First Parish social justice work. With the help of many volunteers, the event netted \$2842 after expenses.
2. Living Our Faith Service - On October 20 we heard about the social justice activism of three members: Jamie Aronson, Lois Fine, and Peggy Gardiner. The service was organized by the SJ Worship Task Group.
3. Shinn Service - The SJ Worship Task Group organized to host Dr. Amy Smith, the founder and director of the MIT Development Laboratory on April 27. She presented a sermon and stayed for a discussion session after the service.
4. Giving First - The Giving First Task Group solicited nominations for the 2025 calendar year, met to review the nominations, and chose monthly recipients.

5. Public witness banners were displayed on the front lawn of the meetinghouse, presenting a series of short messages, most of which were on social justice issues. The selection of messages and the composition and procurement of banners was managed by the Emergent Issues Task Group.
6. We staffed a table at coffee hour to share information about the social justice program. We spread the word about justice actions with the Two for Tuesday newsletter, produced by Mary Cummings and Joanne Pohl.
7. The Giving First Task Group was receiving requests to make space in the Giving First calendar for special fundraisers in response to emergent needs. Having concluded that Giving First is not well suited to such special fundraisers, we wrote a proposal for an alternative mechanism managed by the Parish Committee, and we submitted it to them for consideration.
8. We reviewed a proposal to create a Working Group on Peace and Justice in Israel-Palestine. After seeking additional information, the proposal was accepted.
9. In cooperation with UU Mass Action and the religious education program, we hosted a rally in support of maintaining the Massachusetts right-to-shelter law and providing the funding to accommodate all families in need of shelter.
10. We held a meeting for First Parish people to learn about UU Mass Action and to see how they could get involved. The Executive Director, Rev. Jo Murphy, was the primary presenter.
11. We held a social justice engagement gathering, to help First Parish people see what the social justice working groups are doing, and to show how they can get involved. This was an online event, with break-out groups for each of the working groups.
12. We promoted and facilitated participation of First Parish people in a pair of We Stand for Love demonstrations in Arlington on Valentine's Day. The theme was to counter the hateful and divisive messages and actions of the new Trump administration. The demonstrations were organized by Extinction Rebellion Arlington.
13. We augmented the social justice section of the First Parish website with a page listing Giving First recipients over the past few years. The purpose of the page is to facilitate people making their own contributions to any of the organizations.
14. We hosted the May 2025 edition of the monthly "Action Hour" events produced by UU Mass Action. These are online events, and hosting involved promoting participation among First Parish people and participating in the introduction segment of the hour. We re-created and re-adopted a policy on funding outside organizations, after discovering that the policy adopted last year was inadvertently deleted.

Stewardship Committee

Contact: stewardship@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: Plan and implement the annual First Parish Stewardship drive, which is the source of 69% of our operating funds. First Parish depends on the generosity of our congregation to pay our staff, maintain our spaces and continue our rich programming. Our 2025 campaign theme ‘Moving Forward Hand in Hand’ reflected our strong bonds as a community, and our compassion and perseverance to move forward together during upcoming transitions.

Members:

Amy Speare	Co-chair, term ends 2025 (leaving committee)
Joel Carlton-Gysan	Co-chair, term ends 2027
Jessica Farman	1 yr term ends 2025 (leaving committee)
Maryglenn Vincens	term ends 2027
Paul Sloboda	Graphic Design (consultant)
Sara Galantowicz	Event coordinator (consultant)
Katherine Fleming	Event coordinator (consultant)
Rev. Erica Richmond	

Note: Stewardship committee continued to use a combination of term members and ‘consultants’ that were brought in for specific tasks. We continue to find this model very successful, since there are a few tasks that can be done separately without knowledge of all of the details of the campaign.

Major activities:

- Planned and organized campaign, including several events to increase engagement:
 - Champion Donor Event (invitation only)
 - Congregational lunch
 - Multigenerational pancake breakfast designed to include families
 - Evening gathering for parents of Youth, COA, OWL
- Raised \$815,153 from 275 households as of April 28. This was 99% of our financial goal and 106% of our participation goal and the largest amount ever raised by the congregation.
- Organized 45 ‘Visiting Stewards’ to connect one-on-one with segments of our congregation, such as new members, donors who skipped pledging last year, and donors who have been increasing their pledge over the past few years.
- We continue to send January New Year’s Cards to all prior year donors thanking them for contributing to our thriving community.
- New this year, we did a phone bank during the latter part of the campaign to reach out to donors who had not yet pledged.
- Also new this year, the Stewardship Committee made personal Thank You calls to every donor, making sure that every participant understood how important and appreciated their pledge is.

Priorities: for FY2026

- Modify the Visiting Steward program to reduce load on the stewardship team but still maintain personal outreach during the campaign.
- Partner with the Membership Committee to reach out to new visitors during the campaign with an invitation to contribute to our community.
- Expand the number of members on the committee to better distribute workload across the team.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Stewardship Committee,
Amy Speare, Joel Carlton-Gysan, Jessica Farman, Maryglenn Vincens

Trustees of the First Parish Trust Funds

Contact: trustees@firstparish.info

Mission

First Parish is blessed to have an endowment or trust funds. The purpose of these funds is to ensure the long-term survival of First Parish. The Trustees are fiduciaries for the congregation who are guided by that purpose to manage, invest, and distribute the Trust Funds, including both restricted and unrestricted monies. The purpose of the trust funds is to ensure the long-term survival of First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington

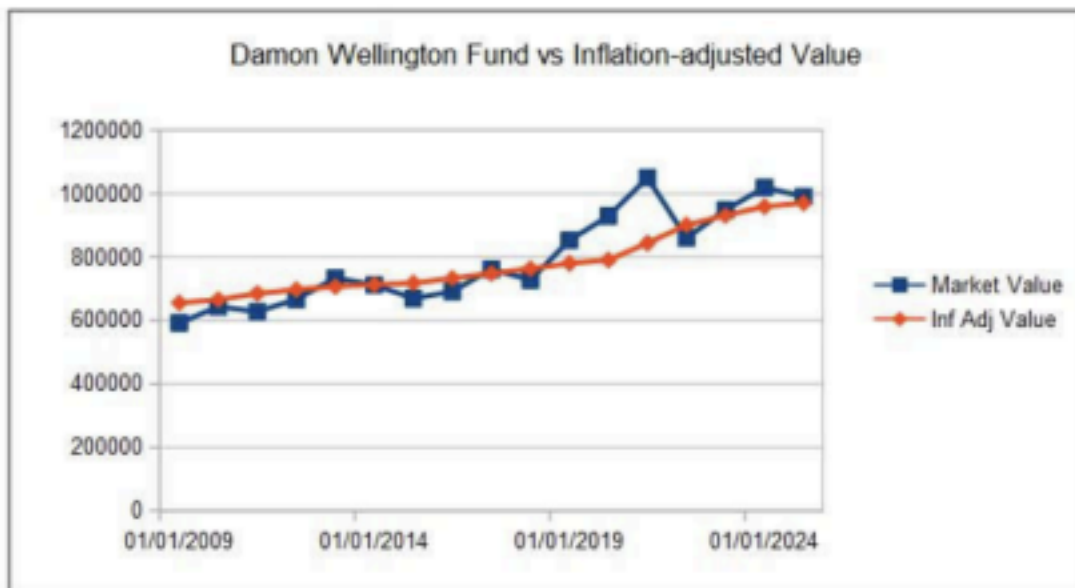
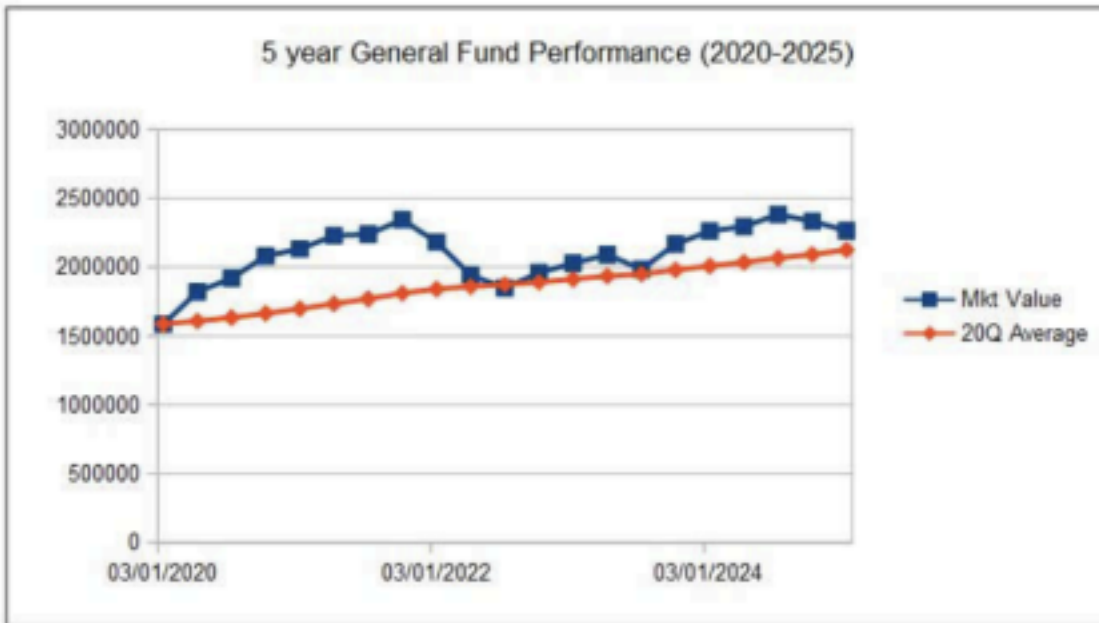
This year the trustees and our fiscal partners, Trillium, continued our strategy of investing conservatively, and with an eye to social justice. Our funds are reviewed each year to ensure that our investments align with our values as a community and reflect the current fiscal environment. We based our annual contribution this year by providing 3% of the unrestricted funds and 3.0% of the Damon Wellington Fund based on their average values during the previous 20 quarters. The Damon Wellington Fund resulted from the sale of the previous parsonage and partially funds the Ministerial Housing Allowance. The trustees' goal is to maintain the value of the Damon Wellington fund to keep pace with the Consumer Price Index.

Our total assets under management by the Trustees as of 3/31/2025 are valued at \$3,331,660. with:

- \$2,265,775 in the General Trust Fund (for unrestricted use)
- \$991,022 in the Agnes Damon Wellington Fund (restricted to use for ministerial housing)
- \$74,862 in restricted use funds (Tobey Fund; Cook, Smith and Teele Fund; Social Justice Fund)

The value on 12/31/2024 was \$3,431,487 which represented a 5.95% rate of return for 2024, while the year to date for Q1 2025 has been -2.91%. Trillium Asset Management's Economic and Market Outlook – First Quarter 2025 includes this overview statement, "Since President Trump's inauguration, his radical fiscal policies have raised economic uncertainty to

near-record highs.” Trillium’s concluding outlook statement begins with, “From here, we expect equity markets to be exceptionally volatile.”



A part of First Parish’s legacy are several items of historical significance. These items include some pewter and silver “communion-ware” that were being stored at Cambridge Savings Bank in Arlington. CSB recently requested that this collection be removed from their premises. This precipitated a re-inventory of all such items known to be in FP’s possession. The items include the following:

- **Silver, silver plate and pewter communion ware:** Overall appraised value Sep. 2012 is \$16,870.

- **Coins and a button from the lead cornerstone box of the 4th meetinghouse:** Overall appraised value January 2013 is \$1,979.
- **Thompson & Small Pulpit Bible of 1798:** Fair market value Oct. 2012 estimated at \$5,000 - \$6,000. On loan to Andover-Harvard Theological Library.
- **Silver tankard c. 1769 from the communion-ware collection, brass buckles and strap ends from a Royal Artillery ammunition pouch, stocking fragment, button, tooth, piece of a cartridge box, and flint:** On loan to Arlington Historical Society until 2029. Overall “declared” (not appraised) value is \$16,000.

Music Committee

Contact: music@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: To work closely with the music director in creating a music program serving the mission of First Parish, to serve as a congregational liaison for music staff and a sounding board for ideas and projects, to be actively involved with equipment and instruments relating to the music program, and to coordinate music events at First Parish.

The 2024-2025 season marked an exciting and transformative period for the music program at First Parish of Arlington. Guided by new leadership, we broadened our musical horizons and strengthened community connections, creating an atmosphere of inclusivity and active participation. The commitment and increased versatility demonstrated by our choir, bell choir, instrumentalists, and broader community have significantly contributed to the ongoing vitality and excellence of our music ministry.

This year began with heartfelt gratitude as we began saying goodbye to Marta Flanagan, our dedicated lead minister for nearly 17 years. Jennifer Kobayashi continued to lead our flourishing Bell Choir, while small ensembles and individual musicians enriched our worship with diverse musical styles. Ken Seitz, our skilled accompanist, notably contributed lovely leadership from the keyboard as well as upcoming original choral compositions during worship services. The Music Committee proactively supported operational enhancements and future planning, highlighted by the successful formal continuation of our Choral Scholar Program in September 2024. Additional highlights included two experiences for a new children’s chorus, an intergenerational orchestra and ensemble commission, and guest musicians from within First Parish and greater Boston such as Crabapple Jam, Sol y Canto, Dr. Andrew Shenton on Christmas eve, and various choral scholars.

Highlighted Events and Achievements

- Choir, Bell Choir, and Small Ensembles resumed rehearsals in Fall 2024
- Fall Music Sunday featuring Eric Whitacre’s *Five Hebrew Love Songs* accompanied by thoughtful reflections on “choosing love” by Director of Music Daniel Parsley
- Music Sunday in March 2025 highlighted by performances of Haydn’s *Little Organ Mass* featuring chamber orchestra, organist Mark Dirksen, and soprano Erin Matthews, with reflections on humility and simplicity provided by Director of Music Daniel Parsley

- A winter and spring children’s chorus providing music in worship led by Director of Music Daniel Parsley
- An intergen orchestra on May 18 and commissioned by Mohawk composer Dawn Avery entitled *Indian Territory* in collaboration with the Social Justice committee.
- RE Youth Sunday showcasing leadership and performances from youth musicians
- Easter Sunday celebration featuring special choral and brass ensemble collaborations with the BU Brass Quintet
- Successful continuation and formal approval of the Choral Scholar Pilot Program (September 2024 – May 2025)
- Increased choir engagement throughout the year with an uptick in average attendance (23.4 average from September-May), including notable participation in special services like Alliance Sunday and Music Sundays
- Community-building Kickoff Choir Social and Potluck event

Conclusion

First Parish is fortunate to benefit from a dynamic and thriving music community. It has been an honor and joy to collaborate with exceptional colleagues and dedicated leadership, including Co-Chairs Robin Baker and Bob Rowlands. I extend deep appreciation to everyone whose efforts made this successful season possible.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel Parsley Director of Music First Parish in Arlington, May 2025

Robin Baker & Bob Rowlands, Music Committee Co-Chairs

Committee, Group, Program and Team Reports

Art Exhibition Committee

Contact: artshow@firstparish.info
 Art Wall Committee Annual Report
 Fall 2024 to Fall 2025

This year the Art Team organized four art shows, representing works in a variety of two and three dimensional media by more than 60 different artists. Artwork was displayed in the Parlor, the wall outside the Parlor entrance, and in the Narthex display case. Opening receptions for each show were widely attended. Two shows featured solo artists and two were congregational shows with special themes, open to all First Parish artists. We made a particular effort to invite youth participants and were pleased to include youth work in both congregational shows. Ten percent of all art sales are donated to First Parish.

- **Passages** September 22 – November 17, 2024. Solo show of landscape oil paintings by Marilyn Downs.
- **Congregational Show: Climate Change and the Environment** December 8, 2024 – February 1, 2025. Artists submitted work that reflected their observations and concerns about the impact of climate-related events on the environment.
- **Patterns in Nature** February 9 – April 4, 2025. Solo show of mixed media works by Nancy Crasco.
- **Congregational Show: Finding the Holy Through Art** April 6 – June 9, 2025. The theme of this show was requested by Marta as part of our congregational farewell to her. We asked artists to submit work inspired by something sacred or holy, or to describe how their creative process is nourished by spiritual experience.

Art Team Members: Peggy Gardiner, Jim Ptacek, Steph Miserlis, Michaela Kirby, Carol Chamberlain and Marilyn Downs

Blood Drives at First Parish 2024-2025

Contact: blooddrives@firstparish.info

It's been another great year, our 26th year in a row supporting our community by providing a place for the American Red Cross to welcome those who would give the gift of life. We ran seven drives this year, four in the Sanctuary on the first Saturdays of October, December, February, and April, and three in the Vestry on the first Wednesdays of November, January, and March. This has been our pattern for most of a decade, since we stopped doing Saturday drives in June and August in the Bailey Room.

Donors respond well to a predictable schedule that fits with the 56 day deferral period between whole blood donations, and the 112 day deferral period between Power Red donations. We have many regulars who've been coming to our drives for many years, not a few of whom who've come back on Sundays and become members!

How we did this year, in detail:

Saturday, October 5th, 2024: 45 units donated, 39 whole blood and 3 Power Red. (This drive was organized by Carolyn White as John Hodges was traveling.)

Wednesday, November 6th, 2024: 37 units, 33 whole blood and 2 Power Red. (This drive was organized by Carolyn Hodges as John Hodges was traveling.)

Saturday, December 7th, 2024: 54 units donated, 40 whole blood and 7 Power Red. (This drive and all the rest for this program year were organized by that traveling man, John Hodges.)

Wednesday, January 8th, 2025: 31 units donated, 25 whole blood and 3 Power Red.

Saturday, February 1st, 2025: 60 units donated, 48 whole blood and 6 Power Red.

Wednesday, March 5th, 2025: 40 units donated, 30 whole blood and 5 Power Red.

Saturday, April 5th, 2025: 62 units donated, 48 whole blood and 7 Power Red.

We met or exceeded the goals the Red Cross was hoping for on five of our seven drives, only missing goals in October and November. Saturdays are generally about double Wednesdays. Our total for this program year? 329. From the ARC, we've had 120 drives, collected 8,708 units from 8,984 donors, and averaged 73 units a drive. These numbers reflect changes we've experienced over time, with our schedule, with the ARC's procedures, and donor behavior nationwide.

John Hodges has been the coordinator of our drives since they started in 2000. In 2009 we were recognized as the best community drive sponsor in the Commonwealth by the ARC Board of Directors. In retirement, John now is consistently out of the country in October, and has multiple commitments that have often conflicted with the necessary advance work and day of drive coordination required for success. The choir has consistently been wonderful at clearing the Sanctuary on the Thursday before a Saturday drive, when we have no tenant on Friday. Many volunteers have helped with setting up, cleaning up, greeting donors, and monitoring donors' wellness after donation. Carolyn White covered for October for three years, and Carolyn Hodges and others have covered for John many times due to travel or illness.

In March 2025, John wrote a Spire article identifying needed change to our blood drive schedule if no reliable, able volunteers came forward to help maintain our existing schedule. In April 2025, John discussed sustainable future schedule options with our First Parish office staff and our ARC account management team. For next program year, we're doing some experimenting to see how it works for everyone and whether donors will respond positively.

We will start our schedule next program year in November, not October. The ARC is seeking an alternate venue for a first Saturday drive in October. We'll do the first Wednesday in November, as in the past, and the first Saturday in December, but in the Vestry, not the Sanctuary. In January we'll have two drives, a first Wednesday, and for the first time, a Tuesday later in the month. For the rest of the year, we'll do a Wednesday drive in March. The ARC is seeking alternate venues for the first Saturdays of February and April. We'll review what's happening next April, and propose a new schedule, possibly first Tuesdays of every month, October through April, possibly another pattern.

As always, suggestions and assistance in this life saving community service are welcome.

- John Hodges, April 27th, 2025

Committee on Ministry (COM)

Contact: com@firstparish.info

Guided by our mission statement, adopted by the Congregation on March 28, 2010, the Committee on Ministry (COM) attends to First Parish's health and well-being as a religious community. The ministers and COM meet monthly with additional meetings as needed.

The Committee on Ministry seeks to discern and nurture the success of First Parish's ministry and serves as a consultative resource to the ministers and other parts of the community when called upon to do so. The committee serves as an impartial observer of congregational life,

advocates for the overall health and well-being of the congregation, and provides a confidential venue for the ministers and congregation members to discuss matters of a sensitive nature. Through all these endeavors we hope to increase the quality of First Parish's ministry, ministers, and congregation.

Members of the committee are invited and appointed by the Parish Committee for up to two 3-year terms. There are currently six members who serve staggered terms. The 2024-25 members and their terms are: Marc Jacobson, first term ends 2025; Julius Pereli, second term ends 2025; Jim Ptacek, first term ends 2026; Ebonié Smith-Cooper, second term ends 2025; Tina Silberman (chair), second term ends 2027; Andrea Winslow, first term ends 2025

Much of our work this year focused on providing support to congregants and the ministers during this time of transition with Marta's impending retirement and Rev Erica's parental leave. Of note:

- We held two listening sessions after Marta's retirement announcement;
 - One in November providing congregants an opportunity to share their feelings about Marta's retirement and ask questions
 - One in March featuring the Interim Search Committee providing an update and answering questions about the interim minister search process
- In January we held a tea gathering to welcome and introduce Rev Tricia Brennan to the congregation
- Along with a crew of volunteers, we are planning Marta's retirement party to be held on May 31st—a time to honor and celebrate the many gifts of her 16 years of ministry at First Parish

We'd like to extend our deepest appreciation to Julius Pereli, Ebonié Smith-Cooper, and Andrea Winslow, who will be rolling off of our committee this year. We are very grateful for all of their contributions!

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Silberman, Chair

Covenant Groups

Contact: covenantgroups@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission:

Covenant groups are composed of up to nine First Parish people who meet once a month to get to know one another, and themselves, in a deeper way. In covenant groups, we listen carefully to each other and come to understand each other across generations, identities and circumstances that, in other contexts, might seem like barriers to communication. Together we form connections, enrich each other's lives, reflect on our own experiences and perspectives, and strengthen the fabric of this congregation.

Meetings follow a format that includes a brief check-in, structured sharing on the monthly theme, and closing reflections. Members commit to meet with their group monthly from September through June.

Chair: Kate Lenox

Committee Members (Covenant Group Conveners)

Katherine Fleming	2nd Sunday
Monique Chaplin	2nd Monday pm Zoom
Anna McMaken-Marsh	2nd Tues
Jessica Farman	2nd Tuesday
Amy Hadley	2nd Wed
Tina Silberman	3rd Tuesday
Kate Lenox	3rd Wed
Peter Heller	3rd Wed Hybrid
Joanna Pushee	4th Sunday Zoom

Major activities:

- Total participation for September, 2024 through June, 2025 is currently 81 members.
- There are 9 groups. Six groups meet in person; two groups meet by Zoom only and one group uses a hybrid model (meaning members can join either in person or via Zoom).
- This year we adjusted the Covenant Group calendar to align with the church year (September through June). Previously, the Covenant Group year ran from January to December (with a summer break.) This change seemed to work well and helped sustain regular attendance throughout the year.

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- In spring of 2025, we added a “learning moment” component to our monthly Convener Group meetings. We allot 20-30 minutes in each session to address common needs among the groups—e.g., how to shape participation among members who may talk too much or too little, how to encourage deep sharing, how to help secure support for needs that may go beyond the boundaries of the Covenant Group.
- We realize that in the midst of the transition to a new settled minister, Covenant Groups can play a central role in helping to maintain community at First Parish. Since we regularly touch over 80 members/month, we have a unique opportunity to keep a pulse on the needs of the congregation and to serve as a bridge to other parts of First Parish.
- Because of this, we want to make sure we make a significant connection to our new ministerial sponsor (still TBD) after Marta’s departure.
- There is a need to document processes for new member recruitment in order to be better able to share the administrative load for identifying and on-boarding new members.

2025 Priorities:

- Continue to support the conveners as they shape group cultures characterized by inclusion, a strong sense of community and deep introspection.
- Help members maintain a deep sense of connection among their Covenant Group—and to the larger First Parish Community.
- Engage more of the Conveners in the recruitment efforts for new members.

Contact: covenantgroups@firstparish.info

Ferry Beach Retreat Planning

Committee Name: Ferry Beach Retreat Planning

Purpose/Mission:

The mission of the Ferry Beach Committee is to organize and conduct a safe, accessible, fun, relaxing and enriching multi-generational retreat weekend for our congregation at Ferry Beach on the coast of Southern Maine. It is the goal of the committee that all in our congregation feel welcome and included, and that Ferry Beach remains an excellent opportunity for members of our congregation to make new friends and connections.

Chairs: Mike Rie and Monique Chaplin

2024 Committee members (including years on committee):

- Monique Chaplin (2019-present)—co-chair
- David D’Antonio (2018-present)
- Mary McCartney (2023-present)
- Mike Rie (2018-present)—co-chair
- Rachael Stark (2024)

Major activities:

- Organized, marketed, and hosted a day-long “UnFerry Beach Retreat” at the Meetinghouse on September 28, 2025
- Remained in contact with staff at Ferry Beach to plan for the 2025 retreat, scheduled for Oct. 3-5.

Retreat highlights:

- 85 people registered for the retreat which took place from 10am-9pm. o Of those, 2 were under age 5, 8 were 5-9, and 7 were 10-17, 68 were adults
- We provided \$220 in scholarships
- There were a number of folks who had never attended a Ferry Beach retreat and who expressed interest in the 2025 weekend
- We held tours at the Cyrus Dallin Museum and at the Jason Russell house o 30 visited Cyrus Dallin, 25 visited Jason Russell
- We provided two catered meals (lunch from Wegman’s and dinner from La Victoria)
- After a day of fun, participant-led activities, we hosted a wonderful Talent Show that included a story reenactment by the kids complete with sets, and readings of poems

generated at the retreat, as well as music performances, singing, and storytelling

- ParCom contributed \$1000 to support the event. We ended up needing only \$595 to break even, but ParCom generously suggested we use the \$405 balance towards future retreat scholarships and needs. Thank you, ParCom!

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- We were very pleased with the results of the event, but it required a tremendous amount of organization and coordination. At this point, we do not currently anticipate hosting a day-long event in the future, although that could change.
- Instead of the Committee coordinating registration and room assignments, as it has in years past, in 2025 Ferry Beach is now managing registration in-house. This will require training and possible tech support for registrants, as they get comfortable with the new registration system.
- Because we did not have a Ferry Beach Retreat in 2024, it may have fallen off of people's radar. We will open registration for the October retreat in April, and market the event with gusto through the end of the church year and into the Fall.
- Because the retreat is occurring a week later than we usually host it, we will have more time to encourage registrations when the new church year begins.
- We are interested in recruiting new committee members, particularly adding someone with younger children, yet this can be challenging to find people willing to commit the time and energy.

2025 Priorities:

- To maintain enthusiasm for a weekend-long retreat in October, 2025
- To train attendees in the new system of registration through Ferry Beach, not through Realm
- To encourage new members to join the Committee

Lay Ministry

Contact: Layministry@firstparish.info

Mission: The mission of Lay Ministry is to help extend the pastoral care of the ordained ministers by providing emotional and spiritual support to people who attend First Parish. In addition, Lay Ministers provide and facilitate practical support in the form of meals, care packages, and general errands through the Wider Network of Care.

Chairs: Carolyn Carlson (co-chair; third term ends Sept 2026), Greg Ruccio (co-chair; second term ends Sept 2025)

Committee Members: Christa Kelleher (second term ends Sept. 2025), Robbie Rinearson (first term ends Sept. 2025), Jeanne Feeley (first term ends Sept. 2026), Julie Garry (first term ends Sept. 2026).

Major Activities

- Lay Ministry met monthly at First Parish with the participation of Rev. Erica Richmond and then with Rev. Tricia Brennan while Rev. Erica was on parental leave. Our meetings consisted of reviewing current and new needs, and identifying members who are experiencing the anniversary of the loss of a loved one. During meetings, Lay Ministers were assigned congregants to reach out to by writing cards, making phone calls, or writing e-mail messages.
- Lay Ministry managed the worship ritual of marking and sharing joys and concerns. Reached out to congregants expressing deep sorrow and hardship through spoken and online chat sharing.
- Lay Ministry provided support for numerous congregants over the course of the year for concerns ranging from spiritual support, to helping after surgeries and emotional support after the death of a loved one. This included the distribution of prayer shawls.
- Lay Ministry coordinated the support of the Wider Network of Care to individuals in the community. The Wider Network of Care provided meals, errands, and care packages.
- Lay Ministry organized and facilitated two affinity groups: Grief Support Group (fourth Tuesday) and Divorce Support (met three times between October 2024 and January 2025). Transition to Retirement continues with consistent attendance but is no longer facilitated by Lay Ministry.

Challenges

- We anticipate that recruitment will continue to be a challenge. While we do currently have six lay ministers, any of them may choose not to renew for a new term.
- Managing Wider Network of Care requests used to be much more of a challenge, but this is the second year we can report improvement. This past year, Lay Ministry routinely used the new email group, widernetworkofcare@firstparish.info, generated to meet the challenge of efficiently finding volunteers for services. The email group allows the Lay Ministry liaison to the WNC (switched monthly) to contact all volunteers who have signed up for the WNC in a single message in response to a need. Lay Ministry is infinitely grateful to all the WNC volunteers who have eagerly provided care services to members in need.

'25-'26 Priorities

- Increase the number of Wider Network of Care volunteers.
- Plan and implement a refresher training for the LM committee in Fall 2025
- Respond to the need for support and affinity groups for families (Christa Kelleher has been in touch with MRE Stevie Carmody)
- Continue to build a Lay Ministry library

Memorial Garden Committee

Contact: memorialgarden@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: The Memorial Garden Committee oversees the First Parish Memorial Garden and Remembrance Corner.

Contact: memorialgarden@firstparish.info

Chair: Barbara Tosti

Committee members (no term end dates): Liz Blumenthal, Jean Nagle, Anne Quaadgras, Greg Ruccio, Sue Sheffler, Allan Tosti

Major activities:

- There were three interments in the Memorial Garden this year, bringing the total to 32. An additional 30 people have prepaid for interment in the Garden. The current fee is \$600. All fees are used for maintenance and improvements.
- Anyone wishing to inter ashes in the Memorial Garden can read the rules and procedures, available on the First Parish website or in printed form. A completed form should be submitted to the Memorial Garden Committee and the fee to the Office Manager.
- Members of the Memorial Garden Committee assist families in choosing their interment location and with the process of interment.
- Names of those interred in the Memorial Garden may be added to the bronze plaque mounted on the adjacent exterior wall at an additional cost.
- The Committee maintains a Memory Book in which loved ones can create a remembrance page of pictures, words, artwork, etc. for each person whose ashes are buried in the Memorial Garden.
- The Committee maintains a Memorial Garden map and list of all interments on one of the pillars between the glass sections of the vestry wall facing the Memorial Garden.
- The Remembrance Corner provides a place for engraved pavers honoring people, groups or ideas. New pavers are installed when enough are ordered to cover the cost of engraving and installing. We added new pavers in the summer of 2023.

2025-26 Priorities:

- Continue to assist First Parish members and friends who wish to have their own or loved ones' ashes interred in the first Parish Memorial Garden or add pavers to the Remembrance Corner.
- Update the posted Memorial Garden map and list in the vestry as ashes are interred.

Submitted by Barbara Tosti
abtosti@outlook.com

Men's Group

Contact: mensgroup@firstparish.info

The First Parish Men's group provides a forum for the men at First Parish in which we help each other with spiritual, emotional, and personal questions and concerns. Discussion themes often interweave questions of security, identity, authenticity, and purpose. Themes are not prepared in advance. We provide a place where men can share their lived experience and hear others in a small-group community.

Our structure involves a check-in followed by discussion of issues that emerge from the check-ins. There are no attendance requirements although continuity benefits everyone.

Attendance varies from two to twelve people. We are looking for additional participants who'd like to build our community and help strengthen bonds at First Parish.

During the pandemic we moved our meetings to Zoom and added more participants. Zoom has proved useful and convenient.

We meet every other week on Sundays from 7-8:30 PM. For more information, meeting dates, and location please send an email to mensgroup@firstparish.info.

Shared Ministry

Contact: sharedministry@firstparish.info

After a long decline in Shared Ministry membership, new members Amy Anderson and Annette Sawyer joined the committee in spring 2024, resulting in a more active and engaged year of work supporting Lay Ministers and Worship Associates in 2024-25.

The primary responsibility of Shared Ministry is to recruit candidates to become Lay Ministers and Worship Associates. Those who are interested submit applications and references that the committee reviews with First Parish clergy. Lay Ministers and Worship Associates serve for a maximum of three two-year terms. There is a comprehensive training in the fall (full days for both Lay Ministers and Worship Associates); new members are installed at a Sunday service.

In 2024, Shared Ministry, with its two new members, was able to act together to recruit and interview prospective new LayMins and WAs. Rev. Erica Richmond, who serves as clergy advisor to Shared Ministry, was instrumental and supportive in the spring 2024 recruitment process. We reached out to four prospective Worship Associates as well as fifteen potential Lay Ministry candidates. Ultimately we conducted two Worship Associate interviews and four Lay Ministry interviews.

Happily, each of the two WA interviews were successful, and Mary Breen and Lily Povey were selected to serve. Mary and Lily joined Loren Gomez and Bill Licea-Kane, each of whom will be in the second term of their second year in 2025-26, as well as David Whitford, who has completed two full two-year terms but agreed to continue into a third term.

On the Lay Ministry side, interviews were conducted with Jeanne Feeley and Julie Garry, both of whom were accepted and agreed to serve; with Dawn Terkla, who committed to joining Lay Ministry in 2025-26; and with Allison Mahoney, who decided in the end that this was not the right time for her to consider Lay Ministry. Jeanne and Julie join Lay Ministers Christa Kelleher and Greg Ruccio, both entering the second year of a second term; Robbie Rinearson, who will start her second term in fall 2025; and Carolyn Carlson, who has completed two terms but agreed to serve for a third two-year term. The Lay Ministers will also be joined in fall 2025 by Dawn Terkla, bringing the complement to seven members.

In recruiting in spring 2025 for the 2025-26 year, we hope to add an additional one to two Worship Associates, and to add one or two more Lay Ministers, with a special emphasis on recruiting at least one male LayMin to provide some needed gender balance in the group.

Anticipating the major change represented by the upcoming retirement of Rev. Marta Flanagan, the Chair of Shared Ministry began a series of one-on-one conversations with Lay Ministers, focusing on those beyond their first year, to ask questions and get feedback on the structure of the program and the needs of individual Lay Ministers. A similar series is planned in the summer with Worship Associates.

In addition, Shared Ministry is hosting two dinners this May, one for each program, to thank the Lay Ministers and Worship Associates for their important contributions, and to hear their thoughts about the ongoing needs of each program.

Cordially,

Cathy Modica
Chair, Committee on Shared Ministry

Lay Ministers for the 2025-26 church year are:

Carolyn Carlson (starting third term fall 2025)
Jeanne Feeley (starting second year of first term fall 2025)
Julie Garry (starting second year of first term fall 2025)
Christa Kelleher (starting second year of second term fall 2025)
Robbie Rinearson (starting third term fall 2025)
Greg Ruccio (starting second year of second term fall 2025)

2025-26 Worship Associates are:

Mary Breen (starting second year of first term fall 2025)
Loren Gomez (starting second year of second term fall 2025)
Bill Licea-Kane (starting second year of second term fall 2025)

Lily Povey (starting second year of first term fall 2025)
David Whitford (starting third term fall 2025)

Worship Associates

Contact: worshipassociates@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission: The Worship Associates are members of First Parish, interviewed and selected by the Shared Ministry Committee to serve up to three two-year terms. We are charged with working with our ministers to bring our individual voices, perspectives, and beliefs to the First Parish pulpit, as well as taking a leadership role in our collective worship life as one of the key ways ministry is shared within our community.

Chair: **Loren Gomez** (second term ends fall 2026)

Committee members:

Bill Licea-Kane (second term ends fall 2026)

David Whitford (second term ends fall 2025)

Lillian Povey (first term ends fall 2026)

Mary Breen (first term ends fall 2026)

Major activities (bulleted list):

- Recruited and supported 2024 online summer service worship leaders; each WA served at 2-3 summer services.
- Surveyed congregation regarding online summer worship experiment and reported findings to Parish Committee, who decided to continue with online worship for Summer 2024, while also providing opportunities for the community to gather via Wednesday potlucks.
- Fall 2024: In-Person Retreat for in-depth discussion of topics relating to worship including a special segment on Intergenerational Worship led by Rev. Stevie Carmody.
- Monthly meetings to consider past services, prepare for the upcoming ones, discuss issues relating to worship raised by staff and members of First Parish, and reflect on how best to create intentional, transformational worship services.
- Served at 9 to 10 services each throughout the church year and during the summer, covering Sunday worship, Embracing the Darkness, Christmas Eve service, as well as memorial services.
- Service at a typical service entails a range of tasks, from coordinating with the minister or worship leader, writing welcoming remarks and/or prayers, communicating OOS details to office staff, and setting up the Sanctuary for worship.
- Supported online worship by preparing Slides and a weekly OOS Staging Directions document with cues for Zoom Host, Slide Manager, and Camera Operators.
- Coordinated with Daniel, Ken, and musical guests providing music for our services.
- Recruited, communicated with and supported guest ministers and other guest worship leaders, credo speakers, Living Our Faith Speakers, etc.
- Continued discussion with the Ferry Beach Committee about potential scheduling change to facilitate a smoother start to the program year.

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- We are aware that our cohort is homogenous in some respects. We seek to be mindful of those whose identities and voices are not represented and encourage a wider diversity of candidates to apply for this role.
- We continue to navigate the evolution of our worship practices amid shifting attendance in-person and online.
- We acknowledge the challenges of balancing the technical and logistical aspects of our work with our spiritual and liturgical responsibilities.

2025-2026 Priorities:

- Work with the interim minister to relate the norms of First Parish as well as be open to creating new ways to reflect and adapt to create meaningful worship in each service.
- Recruit guest preachers with a diversity of messages
- Lead a successful summer of lay-led, online-only services and in-person potlucks.

Ushers

Contact: ushercoordinator@firstparish.info ;
ushers@firstparish.info

Ushers are present at Sunday Services to welcome people and help them find their way; we prepare Sanctuary seating & hymnals for worship, and keep an eye out for safety; we count attendance and collect the offering. We assist the Ministers and Worship Associates as needed, to allow the service to run smoothly.

Coordinator: Kate Tranquada

Ushers active 2024-2025:

Ann Abbott
Tali Avery & Nola Bright
Liz Blumenthal
Ellen Vliet Cohen
Melanie Cohn-Hopwood
Jeanne Feeley
Lois Fine
Lori Kenschaft
Arleen Kulin
Steve McMullin
Brian Miller

Jeff Roberts
Al Tosti
Barbara Tosti
Kate Tranquada
Jane Voytek

Xmas Eve:
Judy Dyer
Sara, John, Abby and Sorrel Galantowicz
Kate Lenox
Lynn Rosenbaum

Major Activities

- A team of 4-5 ushered every Sunday morning this year.
- We had a total of 13 to usher at two Christmas Eve Candlelight Services. Ushers managed the retrieval, preparation, distribution, dismantling and storage of candles and holders for both services.
- We hosted a Wednesday evening potluck in the summer!

Priorities for the coming year

Ushers would still like to spark the return of annual emergency evacuation drills. We will work with the ministers on this.

Turning Outward Groups

Alliance

Contact: alliance@firstparish.info

The Women's Alliance of First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Arlington, MA

Purpose: To provide occasions for those who identify as women at First Parish to meet for fellowship, to deepen their intellectual and spiritual lives through programs that explore topics of value to women, and to engage in service projects. Alliance Giving Plans are reviewed by members every 3 years. The Alliance provides financial support to local, regional, national, and global charities that help women and families through difficult transitions as well as to First Parish, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

Alliance Board Members:

President:	Andrea Winslow
Vice President:	Nina Duncan
Secretary:	Robbie Rinearson
Treasurer:	Kay Snowden
Asst. Treasurer	Jean Nagle
Trustee:	Tina Silberman (expires 2025-26)
Trustee:	Pamela Baldwin (expires 2026-27)
Programs:	Lois Fine, Rachel Lewellen
Membership:	Anne Ehlert
Hospitality:	Annette Sawyer
Communications:	Sharen Leonard
Friendly:	Lisa Heisterkamp Davis
Tech Assistance:	Cheri Minton, P.J. Gardner

Programs:

- Sept. 15, 2024, Hotline for Israel/Palestine with Shira Hoffer and Marta Flanagan
- Oct 18, 2024, Journalism, Justice and Democracy with Natalie Southwick
- January 6, 2025, Chowder Supper for FP hosted by the Alliance
- March 14, 2025, When Gender Matters in Negotiation with Hannah Riley Bowles
- April 11, 2025, Compassion, Justice and Freedom with Jorge Armesto
- May 11, 2025, Alliance Sunday, Jory Agate guest preacher
- June 6, 2025, Alliance Annual Meeting and community dinner

Other Activities:

- Cosponsor Transgender Day of Remembrance, Nov. 20, 2024
- Collation Hosts at memorials for Diane Barry on Oct 28, 2024 and Louise Strayhorn on Nov.17, 2024

- Donation collection for Household Goods in collaboration with Harvest Moon Fair, Nov. 23, 2024 (The Mad Scramble Squad)
- On site service project with Household Goods in Acton, May 21, 2025

Climate Action Working Group

Contact: climateaction@firstparish.info

Mission: The Foundational Principles and Mission of the Climate Action Working Group ends with this summarizing statement: We endeavor to display courageous leadership in advocating for moral, spiritual, social, economic, and technological change, so that the community of Earth may have a healthy and sustainable future.

Organizing and planning the group’s activities is done primarily by a steering committee. Action alerts and other notices are distributed to the CAWG membership as a whole. There are 102 members on our action alert list.

The activity level of the steering committee was low this year.

Activities of CAWG this year have included:

- We participated in lobbying the Massachusetts legislature to pass a strong climate bill before the 2023-2024 session closed at the end of 2024. These efforts were coordinated through the Mass Power Forward coalition, with UU Mass Action being our primary link to the coalition. This coalition effort was successful in moving the Massachusetts House and Senate to agree to a strong climate bill and then to pass the bill.
- We co-sponsored a meeting of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, MVP 2.0. The meeting related to an Arlington project working with populations especially vulnerable to climate change issues.
- We co-sponsored Sustainable Middlesex event called Carbon Countdown 2024: Community Climate Actions
- We reviewed the final report from Elevated Design, Inc. (EDI) regarding issues and options to transition our facilities away from using fossil fuels. We decided to forward two of the options to the Parish Committee for the congregation to consider. This initiative got put on hold while the Parish Committee conducted a congregational survey, and then it got tabled when we all learned that the congregation would need to focus on a process to search for a new senior minister.

Racial Justice Coordinating Committee

Contact: racialjustice@firstparish.info

Mission: The mission of the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee (RJCC) is to help First Parish more fully live up to the goals stated in its mission of being welcoming to all and challenging the excesses and injustices of our time.

Chair: Maggie Carey

Current committee members: Current members include Maggie Carey (chair), Tom Estabrook, and Maryglenn Vincens. RJCC welcomes Marc Fredette on an ad hoc basis.

Major activities:

- The FP racial Justice library continues to be managed by librarian Kate Tranquada and is a regular feature at Sunday coffee hours
- The updated and revamped FP website includes RJCC and R&R updates, including the Affirmation that was passed in May 2024

Donations:

- RJCC donated \$500 to the MLK Birthday Celebration Committee of Arlington, and was named predominantly in their brochure
- RJCC donated \$500 to the Mystic Valley branch of the NAACP for their Freedom Breakfast fundraiser, and was named predominantly in their brochure
- The Giving First recipient for November 2024 was *The Resource Organizing Project*, which supports New England organizations on the front lines of fights for racial, economic, environmental, and gender justice.
- Outward participation:
 - UU Urban Ministry
 - UU Mass Action Hour
 - NAACP's General Membership and Reparations Committee
 - Reparations Interfaith Coalition (RIC), a local religious and ethically-based organization

Internal participation:

- Maintained RJCC and R&R updates on the First Parish planning calendar and helped maintain the Social Justice bulletin board
- Regular representation in Social Justice monthly meetings and participated in tabling for Social Justice at coffee hour
- Participated with the Social Justice summer potluck
- The Reckoning & Repair working group was first established in Jan 2023 and it continues to be RJCC's main focus. This year's accomplishments:
 - We routinely gathered congregational feedback on the Affirmation with the goal of having a congregational vote at the May 2024 annual meeting
 - We created a resource kit, which includes the final Affirmation, historical details, rationale, and examples of the types of reparations First Parish may consider.
 - Offered a viewing and discussion of *The Big Payback*, about an alderwoman from Evanston, Illinois, who led the passage of the first tax-funded reparations for Black Americans.
- Met with the UU Urban Ministry's congregational and volunteer coordinator, Robert Jones, to gain a better understanding of the relationships UUUM has with Black-led organizations, participated in tours at UUUM, and attended their annual meeting.
- Met with ParCom exec and Trustees to discuss their financial (and moral) support for R&R in 2025-2026 program year and beyond; ParCom included \$5,000 in the 2025-2026 budget to be dedicated to the yet-unnamed R&R fund.

Created three new sub-groups in Spring 2025:

- Outreach & Partnerships - which is creating a draft set of criteria for choosing a Black-led organization with whom to partner that will be reviewed at the May 2025 annual meeting
- Communications - which is making sure the congregation is updated on R&R's progress
- Finances - which is focused on dialogue with ParCom and the Trustees to gain their financial and moral endorsements
- Congregational updates in the Spire, the e-bulletin, Sunday Teaser, and order of service on R&R's progress

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

- Would like to continue to focus on increased collaboration with FP Youth Group and hope a Youth Group member can join R&R

2025-2026 Priorities:

- R&R hopes to continue our Reckoning & Repair work and to identify Black-led organizations with whom to collaborate.
- Continue working with the Mystic Valley Branch of the NAACP, Reparations Interfaith Coalition, and other organizations in promoting the importance of MA reparations
- Follow up in promoting the establishment of a Commission to Study Reparations in Massachusetts in this current 2-year session
- Enhance relationships with Town of Arlington and Arlington Historical Society and collaborate on more town events
- Nominate more Black-led organizations to be recipients of *Giving First*
- Continue working closely with FP Social Justice Program as representatives of RJCC

Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG)

A working group of the Social Justice Committee
Contact: ijwg@firstparish.info

Committee Name:

Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG), a working group of the Social Justice Committee

Purpose/Mission: To explore First Parish's relationship to the grave injustices experienced by the Indigenous people of Massachusetts, from being displaced from their homes centuries ago to the vast health and social inequities today. Members will seek truth and raise ideas about how we at First Parish might learn about, acknowledge, and confront these injustices in order to heal and move forward together toward a more just future.

Committee membership:

Ellen Leigh (Chair), Tom Estabrook, Annie Homza, Elizabeth Hunter, Dianne Schaefer, Dawn Geronimo Terkla (with spiritual guidance from Rev. Erica Richmond & Rev. Tricia Brennan)

Activities: Following adoption of Land Acknowledgement at First Parish Annual Meeting last May (5/19/24), IJWG continued our Indigenous Justice Action Framework, to engage with First Parish, the Town of Arlington, UU Mass Action, and Indigenous-led organizations to provide Witness, Education, Action, Relationship, and Support. Highlights have included:

1. Consultation with Massachusetts Tribe Sagamore (Chief), Faries Gray and others in Arlington (Town government, organization leaders) re: ways to honor and respect Indigenous culture and peoples in planning events and projects (September)
2. Co-sponsored Arlington Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration featuring the Mashpee Wampanoag Red Hawk Singers & Dancers at Arlington Town Hall (October)
3. Continued development of Religious Education curriculum for FP children re: Indigenous people and justice. Consultation with Indigenous consultant (Nitana Hicks Greendeer) and collaboration with RE to provide lessons on issues Native Americans face today, with a tie-in to our UU principles, and a call to action. Lessons to be reviewed by Indigenous consultant, followed by meeting with RE Committee about integrating the materials, with goal of piloting program in Fall 2025
4. Native Land Conservancy, Giving First recipient (October) Wrote article for The Spire, encouraged congregants to participate in their land conservation work and learn about their Indigenous wisdom in protecting natural resources and biodiversity for us all.
5. Cultivation of relationships with Indigenous people and Indigenous-led organizations, including Cultural Survival (volunteered for Cultural Bazaars), Lakota YouthStay/One Spirit Lakota (encouraged FP members to become host families and participate in activities); both prior FP Giving First recipients.
6. Collaboration with UU Mass Action's Indigenous Solidarity Team Gathering, serving on monthly planning committee for presentations on "A Spiritual Crisis: Healing Alienation from Mother Earth", "Establishing Indigenous People's Day Statewide", "Footprints Along the Path to Truth-Telling, Relationship, and Repair", "Difficult Conversations Case Study & The Transformative Power of Films", and "Jewish Liberation, Land Back, and Free Palestine"
7. Taking Action for Indigenous Rights via ongoing support for MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda (MILA) and joining Action Day at the State House on May 12th.
8. Spiritual Book Discussion (virtual) of Robin Wall Kimmerer's, "The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World" to understand the lessons of the natural world, that "all flourishing is mutual" (May)
9. Film showing of documentary, "Lakota Nation vs. United States" that reframed perspectives of Native American history in terms of "Extermination, Assimilation, and Reparations", followed by exploration of advocacy of Indigenous rights today (May)
10. "Reimagining Paul Revere with Narragansett Artist and Community Activist Sage Carbone", hosted by the Arlington Historical Society and co-sponsored by IJWG Old Schwamb Mill, and the Dallin Museum. Program offered in conjunction with Freedom's Way Hidden Treasures and Arlington 250 with view of semiquincentennial as "an opportunity to envision what the next 250 years could look like when we engage with history in ways that uplift everyone"

Ellen Leigh (Chair), Tom Estabrook, Annie Homza, Elizabeth Hunter, Dianne Schaefer, Dawn Geronimo Terkla (with spiritual guidance by Rev. Erica Richmond)

Jewish Connections

Contact: jewishconnections@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission:

The First Parish Jewish Connections group exists to make available Jewish learning, rituals, celebrations, participation and perspectives to the First Parish community and the larger community through worship, study, events, conversation, and personal connections.

We provide interfaith families and hyphenated Jewish-UU children and adults with a focus for Jewish identity and Jewish observance within the First Parish community.

Chair - Informal Leader: Rachael Stark

Committee members (include term end dates):

David D'Antonio - Sturdy Second - for the duration

Major activities (bulleted list):

- * Organized and hosted ritual of Tashlich for Rosh Hashanah in October of 2024
- * Provided contact person for questions about Jewish events at First Parish
- * Connected with Arlington and Greater Boston Jewish, UU, and UU Jewish communities

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

In past years, the Jewish Connections Group of First Parish UU of Arlington had formal recognition as part of the worship calendar of First Parish, and a modest budget.

We would like to have that again. Formal recognition, support and publicity would help in the work already we do, and would help us reach people more effectively.

Until the group regains more formal recognition and support from the church, we will continue at a very basic level.

2024-2025 Priorities (bulleted list):

- * Organize and host Tashlich for Rosh Hashanah
- * Explore possibility of starting back up long-standing Seder for Passover
- * Explore possibility of starting back up Chanukkah Latke Party

Accomplishments:

- * Kept Tashlich ritual going since 1999, including during all but one year of COVID 19 Pandemic

UU Urban Ministry

Contact: urbanministry@firstparish.info

Delegates: Lois Fine, Maryglenn Vincens

Activities from 2024-2025

First Parish continued its tradition of donating its entire Christmas service “plate” to support UUUM Renewal House, this year contributing \$4,652.

Marc Jacobson volunteered to be a delegate to the Urban Ministry, replacing Lois Fine, who stepped down after serving for four years. Marc has been a volunteer with the UUUM for many years and will bring new ideas for engaging.

Maggie Carey, as Chair of Racial Justice Coordinating Committee, has participated in UUUM engagements.

Recognizing the value of the Urban Ministry’s strong history with the Roxbury community, the Reckoning and Repair’s Outreach and Partnership subgroup, charged with creating criteria for choosing a Black-led organization with whom First Parish may partner, began a collaboration with the Urban Ministry. In February the group met with Robert Jones, its Congregational and Volunteer Coordinator, to learn about the local Black-led organizations currently engaged with the Urban Ministry. In early May the subgroup went to the Urban Ministry meetinghouse in Roxbury to attend its Open House and subsequently returned for a private tour, hosted by Mr. Jones.

The Outreach and Partnership Subgroup members are Andrea Winslow (lead), Mary Breen, Jim Brown, Bill Gardner, and Maryglenn Vincens.

First Parish continued to promote UUUM activities through the Parish’s website and E-Bulletin, as well through a listserv of Racial-Justice-interests members. A highlight continues to be its Community Conversations, this year about Roxbury and the American Revolution.

Maggie Carey and Maryglenn Vincens attended a Delegates Luncheon and meeting in November, where they met delegates from other congregations and heard delegate duties articulated to the group.

Priorities for 2025-2026

Continue to collaborate with the RJCC and the Reckoning and Repair task force to support its effort to develop criteria for relationships with one or more Roxbury organizations.

Invite Mary Margaret Earl, UUUM Director and Lead Minister, to preach at First Parish.

Explore ways to build connections between FP Youth and UUUM.

Find a third delegate.

Promote UUUM activities to First Parish and increase the ministry’s visibility with our congregation.

Welcoming Congregation Committee (WCC)

Contact: welcoming@firstparish.info

Purpose/ Mission: The WCC was chartered in January 2023 to strengthen and maintain First Parish Arlington’s Welcoming Congregation designation with the UUA in collaboration with lay and ordained leadership, focusing on education, congregational life, and community

outreach. The committee successfully led the congregation in completing the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal in May 2024 and is on schedule to apply for another renewal in May or June 2025.

Chairperson: Zoë Stewart

Committee Members: Michaela Kirby, Ruben Hopwood, Wendy Page, Lisa Heisterkamp, all serving a 3 year term due to end in March 2026; Carolyn White joined in 9/24 serving a 3 year term due to end on 9/27.

Major Activities:

June 8th Saturday 2024 LGBTQ+ Pride Parade We organized a First Parish Group to march in the parade. It was the first time FP had done so in many years. Much activity went into organizing ahead of time including a group meeting in the Parlor to make signs. We also designed and purchased T-shirts to sell.

June 9th Sunday We collaborated with Rev. Erica and Stevie in planning and carrying out the Sunday service honoring Pride.

July 14, Sunday We organized and led the summer service with a lovely guest speaker giving the sermon. She spoke of her joy since her transition.

October 9 Wednesday 7:30-9 PM We showed the film 'Will & Harper' in the Parlor. Rev Erica guided us through a discussion of our responses. 30 people attended.

November 20th Wednesday TDOR. We collaborated with the Arlington Rainbow Commission to host a dinner & affinity group meeting for trans & non-binary folx in the Vestry. It was followed by an outdoor vigil with speakers and solidarity open to all.

January 12th Sunday 2025 We organized and sponsored a showing of the film 'The Dream Life of Georgie Stone' in the Parlor. Rev. Erica guided us in a discussion afterward. 35 people attended.

Fridays February 7, 28 & March 14, & 28 2025 We followed the UUA Common Read of Authentic Selves. Rev. Stevie and Melanie Hopwood-Cohn collaborated with us by co-facilitating a session or two. Each meeting offered dinner, guided exercises, some videos, music and additional resources provided by the UUA. 15 people attended.

March 30th Sunday Trans Day of Visibility Panel Discussion We collaborated with the Arlington Rainbow Commission to host this event. 38 people attended.

April & May 1. We are sharing selected portraits from 'To Survive on this Shore' by Jess Dugan with two other UU congregations in the general area: First Parish Wayland and North Parish Andover have already shown the work and we expect to share it with others soon. We had a large show of that work on display in our Parlor last spring and it was very powerful for many people. It is heartwarming to see our work impacting other congregations in the region so positively.

2. We are making a Pride quilt, following a pattern from the Canadian Quilt Guild Sew Along which will hang in the Sanctuary.

3. Two of our committee members went to First Parish Malden on April 26 to participate in Beyond the Binary, a host of informative sessions originating from First Parish Syracuse NY.

4. May 22 we are co-sponsoring an event with Social Justice which will be led by youth. The purpose is to send postcards expressing appreciation to people who provide gender affirming services.

On-going work: We meet monthly to plan events and to schedule worship activities, such as chalice lighting on certain Days of Remembrance, sometimes participating in the planning of services that uplift the LGBTQ+ community. We keep track of all the activities needed for the Five Practices of Welcoming so we can apply again to be renewed in June 2025. We continue to educate ourselves by watching webinars from Transforming Hearts, A4TE (Attorneys for Trans Equality) and other sources of real information. We support each other in our on-going learning and sometimes even find genuine fun in the process.

Financial Reports

Auditor

Contact: auditor@firstparish.info

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR/ INTERNAL REVIEWER

Contact: auditor@firstparish.info

Auditor Contact: Pamela Linov

For the 2024-2025 program year, random internal audits of transactions were conducted to ensure consistency among billing and payment processes throughout the First Parish financial systems.

Financial transactions reviewed were:

- Flow of member pledges payments from Realm through bank
- Review of Trust Fund transfers
- Tracking of general office payments
- Verification of payroll expenses
- Committee request reimbursements

All transactions were verified.

Respectfully submitted, Pam Linov

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

Contact: treasurer@firstparish.info

Purpose/Mission:

To maintain accurate and controlled financial records and reporting for First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington.

Treasurer: Carolyn Hodges (2st term ends 2027)

Assistant Treasurer: Annie Hewitt (1st term ends 2025)

Major activities:

- Hosted the 2024-2025 Financial Summit, November 2024 to continue coordination with Parish Committee, ministers, Finance, Trustees, Property, and other committees. Work continues to provide community and volunteer support.
- Prepared Monthly Financial Performance Scorecard and Financial Statements for Parish Committee review.
- Continued with Parish Committee sub-groups for a multiyear planning effort “Charting the Course” as well as planning for ministry transition resulting from Marta’s announced retirement.
- Close work with Human Resources Committee recommendations regarding implementation of the Commonwealth of MA Family Medical and Leave program.
- Coordination with Finance committee members to prepare the 2025-2026 budget.

Challenges or improvement opportunities:

First Parish continues to thrive! We are extremely grateful for the generosity and commitment of our First Parish community. Thank you all for your timely pledge payments. Your financial commitments provide the foundation for our vibrant community.

THANK YOU AS WELL for your special gifts given to First Parish. From time-to-time First Parish receives donations to supplement First Parish revenue; examples include artist contributions resulting from the Art Wall sales, acknowledgments honoring specific parishioners or staff as a token of thanks, or a donation in remembrance of a beloved First Parish member.

The Treasurer will review the current financial status at the 2024-2025 Annual meeting (May 18, 2025).

The community support of the Harvest moon Fair and other fundraising throughout the year was extraordinary! Special thanks to David Klingsberg and Jim Benn for the added help for the Harvest Moon Fair as well to Annie Hewitt’s coordination efforts for the plate counting, especially on special Sundays with high attendance. We remain challenged to find folks each week to help with the plate; we continue to seek volunteers. Please watch for a request for counting assistance starting in Fall 2025- we hope timing for this volunteer task will occur during the week, rather than after services each Sunday.

A special thank you to Ebiere Omoregie, Office Manager, completing a very successful first year with First Parish (Ebiere- you are a rockstar!). Thanks, as well, to Liz McKersie, Bookkeeper; Liz will always go the extra mile to help maintain and train others on critical financial activities. Ebiere Omoregie welcomed Allison Sillers to the First Parish office staff. Allison has hit the ground running! The office team is highly effective! When you next see Ebiere and Allison, please thank them for their efforts and dedication.

2025-2026 Priorities:

2024 – 2025 Treasury activity will continue to ensure appropriate financial oversight and control; your financial commitment is important, and we work to protect your gifts and respect your support.

Treasury and Finance worked closely together to prepare and carefully review the proposed 2025-2026 budget. This budget positions First Parish for success in the coming year. Looking ahead to ministry transition, we will partner with leadership and our ministers to plan supporting activities, carefully review expenses, and continue visioning efforts to develop forward-looking financial planning.

If you have questions, please email: Treasurer@FirstParish.info

Sincerely,
 Carolyn Hodges, Treasurer
 Annie Hewitt, Assistant Treasurer

Giving First and Special Initiatives

**First Parish Giving First 2024-2025 (as of March 31,2025)
 Recipients and Special Initiatives**

Giving First		
Jun/Jul/Aug	ArCS	\$1,294.25
Jun/Jul/Aug	Immigrant Learning Center	\$1,294.25
September	Gould Farm	\$2,705.00
October	Native Land Conservancy	\$1,806.00
November	Resources Organizing Project	\$2,093.50
December	The Children’s Room	\$3,052.50
January	Women’s Lunch Place	\$2,397.00
February	Arlington Youth Counseling Ctr	\$1,732.00
March	Resilient Sisterhood Project	\$2,122.00
Special Initiatives		

October	UUA Disaster Relief- Hurricane	\$2,771.91
December	UUA Renewal House (12/24)	\$4,652.00

Profit & Loss, Year Ending April, 2025

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington M

Profit and Loss by Month
July 2023 - June 2024

	JUL 2023	AUG 2023	SEP 2023	OCT 2023	NOV 2023	DEC 2023	JAN 2024	FEB 2024	MAR 2024	APR 2024	MAY 2024	JUN 2024	TOTAL
Income													
4100 Pledges													\$0.00
4110 Current Year Pledges	120,332.22	23,425.26	29,450.25	70,681.77	115,009.25	142,794.13	71,026.94	23,251.94	47,238.70	54,059.45	15,402.90	18,319.73	\$730,992.54
Total 4100 Pledges	120,332.22	23,425.26	29,450.25	70,681.77	115,009.25	142,794.13	71,026.94	23,251.94	47,238.70	54,059.45	15,402.90	18,319.73	\$730,992.54
4200 Plate Offerings	742.00	1,153.00	3,423.00	4,418.00	4,237.00	4,004.50	4,145.00	3,895.78	6,156.90	3,775.00	4,662.00	2,801.00	\$43,413.18
4300 Fundraisers													\$0.00
4310 Fair				-1,154.51	19,525.74	-626.74	30.00						\$17,774.49
4330 Other Fundraisers			4,851.07		-2,558.50	320.00		70.00	562.00	3,265.00	8,257.80	-5,926.70	\$8,840.67
Total 4300 Fundraisers			4,851.07	-1,154.51	16,967.24	-306.74	30.00	70.00	662.00	3,265.00	8,257.80	-5,926.70	\$26,615.16
4400 User Donations (Building Fees)													\$0.00
4410 Lead Tenant Rent	4,515.10	4,108.22	4,515.10	3,937.50	3,937.50	3,937.50	4,777.60	4,908.85	4,908.85	4,908.85	5,040.10	4,777.60	\$54,272.77
4420 Other building use	992.50	630.00	1,993.75	6,000.00	1,337.50	6,270.94	6,765.00	2,240.00	3,215.00	8,338.00	2,005.00	4,480.00	\$44,267.69
Total 4400 User Donations (Building Fees)	5,507.60	4,738.22	6,508.85	9,937.50	5,275.00	10,208.44	11,542.60	7,148.85	8,123.85	13,246.85	7,045.10	9,257.60	\$80,540.46
4500 Other Contributions													\$0.00
4510 Parking revenue	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	1,000.00	500.00	500.00	1,000.00	500.00	0.00	\$6,000.00
4511 Solar Panel revenue		994.68							3,626.07				\$5,575.04
4520 One-Time Gifts	2,333.33	2,333.33	2,333.33	2,473.33	2,193.33	3,475.33	1,191.33	2,333.33	2,424.33	3,060.83	5,022.33	-1,174.17	\$27,999.96
4520b One-Time Gifts (other)							1,811.00	2,500.00					\$8,043.50
4525 Social Justice					2,873.50								\$2,873.50
4540 Non-recurrent income	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	\$60,000.00
Total 4500 Other Contributions	7,833.33	8,628.01	7,833.33	7,973.33	10,966.83	8,475.33	9,002.33	10,333.33	11,550.40	9,060.83	10,522.33	6,512.82	\$110,462.00
4600 Interest	690.56	683.02	622.81	675.06	617.88	624.25	822.95	788.87	813.38	851.84	847.94	750.94	\$8,789.50
4700 Trust Fund Contributions													\$0.00
4720 Trust Fund Contributions to Capital Expenses	2,555.00	14,500.00			14,500.00			14,500.00		14,500.00			\$60,555.00
4730 Trust Fund-Wellington	751.00	6,545.00			6,545.00			6,545.00		6,545.00			\$26,931.00
Total 4700 Trust Fund Contributions	3,306.00	21,045.00			21,045.00			21,045.00		21,045.00			\$87,486.00
Total Income	\$136,411.71	\$59,672.51	\$52,669.31	\$92,531.15	\$173,718.20	\$165,799.91	\$96,569.82	\$66,533.77	\$74,445.23	\$105,303.97	\$46,738.07	\$33,715.19	\$1,106,328.84
GROSS PROFIT	\$136,411.71	\$59,672.51	\$52,669.31	\$92,531.15	\$173,718.20	\$165,799.91	\$96,569.82	\$66,533.77	\$74,445.23	\$105,303.97	\$46,738.07	\$33,715.19	\$1,106,328.84
Expenses													
5100 Personnel					0.00								\$0.00
5110 Salary	35,190.62	43,840.42	43,029.40	47,374.17	40,993.11	51,772.94	46,336.96	46,595.79	45,563.91	45,693.24	51,499.24	47,217.58	\$545,107.38
5120 FICA (EmployER)	2,985.78	2,013.73	1,863.88	2,196.26	1,341.24	1,680.20	1,533.56	1,892.42	2,057.88	2,092.27	2,619.07	2,359.91	\$24,636.20
5130 Workers Comp		1,046.00	812.00			851.00			851.00				\$3,560.00
5140 Pension (UUA)	2,926.72	3,561.02	3,561.02	3,745.18	3,197.64	3,001.92	3,472.72	3,451.36	3,298.23	3,319.36	3,469.74	3,469.74	\$40,474.65
5150 Health Insurance	2,990.68	4,316.00	4,316.00	4,316.00	4,316.00	4,316.00	4,316.00	4,316.00	4,316.00	3,033.00	2,664.32	3,778.92	\$46,994.92
5160 Life Insurance	100.80	100.80	158.90	158.90	158.90	158.90	158.90	158.90	122.50	217.70	170.10		\$1,824.20
5170 Disability Insurance	261.11	261.11	440.95	351.03	351.03	351.03	351.03	351.03	351.03	294.70	442.04	368.37	\$4,174.46
5190 Prof Expenses	1,435.13	2,076.65	2,073.26	2,291.38	2,512.52	1,886.44	3,027.76	1,765.97	2,520.16	4,649.13	3,743.63	3,714.59	\$31,696.62
5193 Recruitment expenses								400.00	852.31	150.91			\$1,403.22
FICA		-87.82	0.00					87.82					\$0.00
Total 5100 Personnel	45,890.84	57,127.91	56,255.41	60,432.92	52,870.44	64,018.43	59,294.75	58,831.47	59,969.42	59,355.11	64,655.74	61,079.21	\$699,871.65
5200 Contractors & Consultants													\$0.00
5240 Consultants (HRL, Finance, Prof)		2,082.50	927.50		1,785.00	805.00	840.00	1,125.00	862.50	1,582.50	1,492.50	1,200.00	\$12,702.50
Total 5200 Contractors & Consultants		2,082.50	927.50		1,785.00	805.00	840.00	1,125.00	862.50	1,582.50	1,492.50	1,200.00	\$12,702.50
5300 Office Expenses													\$2,088.58
5320 Postage											9.35		\$9.35
5330 Printing									11.30				\$11.30
5340 Telephone & Internet		422.16	422.16	845.19		2,223.03	423.03	425.99	851.98	425.68		731.53	\$6,770.75
5350 Office Supplies & Repairs	32.92	84.98	1,690.30	935.95	831.72	356.95	537.64	138.29	534.64	142.96	129.56	1,193.52	\$6,609.43
5360 Office Equip Lease & Maintenance	533.42	343.53	339.95	738.76	537.40	564.26	651.35	504.94	613.55	590.93	521.61	859.21	\$6,798.91
5397 Computer software/hardware	482.39	1,149.85	1,230.49	975.64	1,425.73	1,058.52	4,836.21	1,039.25	811.83	506.74	383.69	383.69	\$14,284.03

Cash Basis Wednesday, August 14, 2024 07:56 AM GMT-04:00

1/3

Balance Sheet As of April 30, 2025

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington M

Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2024

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1-Church	0.00
1010 Treasurers Checking	80,326.90
1011 RE Checking	0.00
1012 Treasurers Money Market	0.00
1013 Cambridge Savings	50,425.86
1014 Leader Bank Savings	506,647.38
1021 Organ Reserve Passbook Savings	0.00
1023 Fair Savings	11,909.00
Total 1-Church	649,309.14
2-Alliance	
1030 Alliance Operating	11,803.52
1031 Alliance Trustees	0.00
Total 2-Alliance	11,803.52
3-Trustees	
1040 Trustee Checking	0.00
Total 3-Trustees	0.00
Bill.com Money Out Clearing	137.34
Office Supplies & Repairs-	0.00
Total Bank Accounts	\$661,250.00

	TOTAL
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	0.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$0.00
Other Current Assets	
1130 Alliance Investments	518,714.36
1140 Trust Fund Investments	2,363,239.00
1150 Agnes Whitman Damon Wellington Fund	1,004,668.00
1200 Miscellaneous Assets	6,227.90
1205 Petty Cash	95.00
Payroll Corrections	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$3,892,944.26
Total Current Assets	\$4,554,194.26
Fixed Assets	
1310 Church Property	4,170,100.00
1320 Organ & Pianos	618,090.00
1330 Equipment and Furnishings	50,000.00
1340 Misc Assets - Vault, etc.	27,870.00
Total Fixed Assets	\$4,866,060.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$9,420,254.26
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	0.00
Total Accounts Payable	\$0.00
Credit Cards	
Chase Credit Card	12,978.42
Total Credit Cards	\$12,978.42

	TOTAL
Other Current Liabilities	
2100 Accounts Payable	0.00
2120 Payroll Tax Payable	3,850.08
2121 401K Employee Salary Reduction Contribution	-208,266.60
2122 401K Contributions	213,462.02
2123 Pre-Tax Health Insurance	-13,824.24
2300 Restricted-Designated Prps Funds	0.00
2301 Ferry Beach	1,747.86
2303 Instrument Tunings	0.00
2305 Renewal House	0.00
2306 Shinn Fund	0.00
2307 Social Justice	0.00
2311 Memorial Garden	7,067.91
2314 Founders Fund	0.00
2315 Racial Justice Committee	0.00
2316 Artwall	0.00
2321 Sound, Tapestry, Linen reserve	0.00
2322 Jewish Awareness	0.00
2333 Youth Group Coordinator Reserve	2,000.00
2334 Ministerial Discretionary Fund	30,384.18
2335 Youth Group	2,634.08
2336 UUA-MBD friends	0.00
2337 Religious Ed Reserve	2,268.52
2338 Coffee table	0.00
2339 Second minister search fund reserve	0.00
2340 Remembrance Corner	1,876.18
2341 Giving First Fund	1,458.00
2342 Kitchen Registry	0.00
2343 BLUU	0.00
2344 Indigenous Justice Working Group	0.00
2350 Capital Projects Fund	0.00
2399 Misc Designated Funds	0.00
2400 Music Fund	46,053.20
2401 Sanctuary Fund	0.00
2402 Property Comm. Rollover	0.00
2403 STAR	0.00
2404 Living Tradition	0.00
2405 Sabbatical Reserve	48,587.06
2406 Auction reserve	0.00
2407 Transylvania Fund	0.00
2408 Tornado Relief	0.00
2409 funds freed up by Woburn Grant	0.00
2410 General Reserve Contingency Fund	239,745.97
2411 Property Maintenance Contingency Fund	0.00
2412 Meetinghouse Restricted Fund	0.00
2413 UUlations fund raiser	0.00
2414 Parish Committee Contingency Fund	0.00
2415 Donation for addit. minist. support	0.00
2416 Other Current Liabilities	58,676.86

	TOTAL
Total 2300 Restricted-Designated Prps Funds	442,499.82
2800 Restricted-Future Years	5,499.50
2801 Pledges for Future Year	65,759.00
2802 PPP Loan Reserve	0.00
2803 Prepaid housing allowance	0.00
Total 2800 Restricted-Future Years	71,258.50
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00
Payroll Liabilities	
HSA	0.00
MA Paid Family And Medical Leave	0.00
UUA Dental Plan	0.00
Total Payroll Liabilities	0.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$508,979.58
Total Current Liabilities	\$521,958.00
Long-Term Liabilities	
2302 2302- AIM Security Deposit	16,380.00
2317 Second Minister Fund	40,101.14
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$56,481.14
Total Liabilities	\$578,439.14
Equity	
3100 Trust Funds Balances	
3101 Founders Fund	0.00
3102 Tobey Fund	39,456.00
3103 Maintenance Funds	32,555.00
3104 Social Investment Fund	5,892.00
3105 Agnes Whitman Damon Wellington Fund	1,004,668.00
3106 Minister's Housing	0.00
3107 Capital Infrastructure	0.00
3190 General Trust Funds	2,296,836.00
Total 3100 Trust Funds Balances	3,379,407.00
3200 Alliance Funds	530,517.88
3900 Unrestricted Equity	
3910 Fixed Assets Equity	4,866,060.00
3920 Cash and Securities Unrestricted	0.00
Total 3900 Unrestricted Equity	4,866,060.00
Opening Balance Equity	0.00
Retained Earnings	900.00
Net Income	64,930.24
Total Equity	\$8,841,815.12
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$9,420,254.26

Finance and Budget Background Data 2024-2025 Revenue

FIRST PARISH UUA ARLINGTON SCORECARD TEMPLATE

Jun-24 FINAL- as of 8-15-2024 (reviewed with Exec prior to close)

	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Variance	%var	YTD actual	YTD Budget	Variance (amt)	Variance (%)	Notes/ Drivers
Income									
Pledge	18,320	36,450	(18,130)	-49.7%	730,992	729,000	1,992	0.3%	YTD pledges exceed budget level.
Plate	2,801	3,300	(499)	-15.1%	43,413	39,600	3,813	9.6%	YTD plate exceeds budget level.
Fundraiser	(5,927)	0	(5,927)	0.0%	29,488	19,500	9,988	51.2%	Successful fundraisers include: Pie Palace, Chili (Sept) Harvest Moon Fair (Nov), Taste of First Parish (May).
Tenant- primary	4,778	5,189	(411)	-7.9%	55,415	62,265	(6,850)	-11.0%	AIM rent less than planned due to lower student enrollment than expected.
Other Building	4,480	2,500	1,980	79.2%	43,126	30,000	13,126	43.8%	Increase in building use for program year.
Parking Revenue	0	500	(500)	-100.0%	6,000	6,000	0	0.0%	Parking revenue \$500 per month- Full year on track
Other one time gifts	4,687	1,196	3,491	291.9%	13,618	14,350	(732)	-5.1%	Sol system revenue (\$5,575). Additional one time gifts total \$8,043
Surplus contribution & 2nd minister fund	3,826	7,333	(3,508)	-47.8%	87,999	88,000	(1)	0.0%	Parish Committee authorized use of surplus (retained earnings) and 2nd Minister fund contribution (yr 3).
Interest Income	751	417	334	80.2%	8,789	5,000	3,789	75.8%	Interest from Leader Bank (operating accounts).
Trustee funds	0	0	0	100.0%	87,486	83,000	4,486	5.4%	MTD Variance due to timing (Q4 received early) Full year includes Trustee adjustments for 2022-2023.
Total (sum)	33,715	56,885	(23,169)	-40.7%	1,106,328	1,076,715	29,613	2.8%	
Return to Retained Earnings					(60,000)		(60,000)		FP repayment of 2023-2024 ParComm Approved loan from retained earnings
All Income	33,715	56,885	(23,170)	-40.7%	1,046,327	1,076,715	(30,388)	-2.8%	Key drivers: Rebounded pledges & plate (2023-2024) offset by lower than expected tenant revenue.
% explained	100.0%	100.0%			105.7%	100.0%			
Expense									
Salary*	47,218	47,016	(202)	-0.4%	545,106	564,186	19,080	3.4%	2023-2024 Increases effective 7/1. YTD remains below budget as result of hiring delay and unfilled positions.
Benefits (all)*	13,861	15,621	1,759	11.3%	154,762	187,448	32,686	17.4%	2023-2024 Increases effective 7/1. YTD Benefits favorable due to budgeted offerings unused by staff.
Professional Expenses	1,200	917	(283)	-30.9%	12,702	11,000	(1,702)	-15.5%	Higher than budget reflects unbudgeted \$1,400 search expense.
Utilities	496	1,356	860	63.4%	32,714	32,275	(439)	-1.4%	
Property- maint	(14,855)	7,351	22,207	302.1%	92,715	92,715	0	0.0%	Clocktower painting paid Sept 2023 and window replacement paid in May 2024-offset by rollover reclassification from FY 2022-2023 (captured at year end).
Office & General exp	10,202	4,231	(5,971)	-141.1%	90,826	57,770	(33,056)	-57.2%	Includes authorized added computer contract and maintenance that was not budgeted.
Committees	3,284	4,329	1,045	24.1%	43,015	51,950	8,935	17.2%	ParComm lower expenditure than budgeted.
Outreach, special initiatives, welcoming Cong	1,683	3,150	1,467	46.6%	62,645	80,851	18,206	22.5%	Timing- Quarterly UUA dues fully paid.
unapplied	0	0			6,913	0	(6,913)	0.0%	Reflects timing difference due to credit card expense allocation, fiscal year carry over.
Total (sum)	63,089	83,970	20,881	24.9%	1,041,397	1,078,195	36,798	3.4%	
All Expense	63,089	83,970	20,881	24.9%	1,041,397	1,078,195	36,798	3.4%	Key driver- Overall favorable operating expense; larger expenses in Property and Office, offset by lower expense in salary, benefits and committees.
% explained	100.0%	100.0%			100.0%	100.0%			
net position	(29,374)	(27,086)	-2,288		4,930	-1,480	6,410		added contribution to Retained earnings
		ck	-2,288				6,410		

June 2024 Comments

Current year pledges exceed budget. June 2024 prepaid pledges reflected on Balance Sheet for future period (\$65.8K).

ParComm authorized 2023-2024 surplus loan recorded (account 2411) \$60,000 with monthly income capture of \$5,000. Given resulting surplus FY 2023-2024, repaid as of 6-30-24.

Second Minister fund is in year 4, monthly income capture \$2,333.33 as planned. For FY 2025 \$28,000 now planned, using some of the estimated residual per ParComm confirmation of disposition in 2024-2025 budget.

The General Reserve reflects additional Trustee transfer of prior period funds in March 2024 (\$45,100 from Building and \$8,080 from Minister Housing) and reduction to cover excess YTD Property expense (\$21K). The reserve totals \$239,745 representing contingency reserve for 2023-2024 of \$135,100 (2 months of Personnel, Property, Utilities and Insurance exp) and \$104,645 of discretionary surplus -- **the new balance and the contingency calculation will be updated as of July 2024 using updated 2024-2025 budget information.**

2022 AIM security deposit recorded (account 2302) \$16,380.00.

2023-2024 Property Improvements will draw from budgeted funds (\$64,500) as well as rollover of unused funds from 2022-2023 (\$28,630) totaling \$93,130.

In Sept- the roll-over was reclassified to Exp to offset the costs to paid the clocktower

2023 capital expenditures include:

\$42,500 - Windows sanctuary
 \$34,000 - Spire Painting paid in Sept 2023
 \$6,000 - Dishwasher (remaining balance)
 \$5,000 - Refrigerator replacement (unplanned)
 total: \$88,500

Unplanned Expenditures: 8,000.00 plumbing repairs
 6,000.00 pest control
 6,000.00 alarm system replacement
 1,000.00 building repairs
 total 21,000.00

2023-2024 Reviews requested: see account details tab.

Proposed Budget for FY 2025 – 2026

FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST OF ARLINGTON, MA

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY26

Account number		FY 24 ACTUA	FY 25 Budget	FY26 budget	subtotals
Expenses					
5100	Salary, Benefits & Other Personnel Expenses	\$699,872	\$811,424		\$804,416
Operating Expenses					
Office Expenses - Total		\$49,279	\$48,500		\$56,000
5320	postage	\$21	\$500	\$0	
5340	Telephone & Internet	\$6,771	\$6,400	\$6,400	
5341	IT Support (newly broken out of 5340)		\$6,100	\$6,100	
5350	Supplies/Repairs/Printing	\$8,698	\$8,000	\$6,000	
5360	Office Equip Lease & Maintenance	\$6,799	\$9,000	\$9,000	
5397	Computer Software/Hardware	\$17,834	\$12,000	\$16,000	
5415	Treasury Costs (including payroll)	\$5,600	\$6,500	\$6,500	
	ministerial search related expenses	\$3,557		\$6,000	
Contractors & Consultants - Total		\$12,703	\$11,000		\$12,500
5240	Consultants (bookkeeping)	\$12,703	\$11,000	\$12,500	
General Expenses - Total		\$42,811	\$35,000		\$38,500
5410	Cleaning & Supplies (Housekeeping)	\$8,897	\$5,000	\$6,000	
5420	Coffee/Friendship Hour Supplies	\$6,772	\$4,000	\$5,500	
5430	Worship Supplies, Etc.	\$1,148	\$2,000	\$2,000	
5432	Worship Associates (was Sound & Linen)	\$0			
5440	Stipends/Honoraria for Guest Speakers	\$2,273	\$2,800	\$2,800	
5470	Staff development	\$0	\$200	\$200	
5482	Auditor/Audit Reserve	\$2,676	\$2,000	\$2,000	
5486?	RE welcome activities	\$487	\$1,000	\$0	
5580	Insurance	\$20,559	\$18,000	\$20,000	
Property - Total		\$131,074	\$112,030		\$110,650
5511	Utilities: Gas Heat	\$12,125	\$15,000	\$12,800	
5512	Utilities: Water & Sewer	\$4,394	\$5,000	\$5,000	
5513	Utilities: Electricity	\$11,212	\$9,000	\$9,000	
5514B	PowerOptions Membership	\$258	\$250	\$250	
5514C	Solar Power Purchase Agreement	\$4,726	\$5,000	\$5,000	
5520	Heating Maintenance & Repair	\$935	\$7,000	\$5,000	
5521	Elevator Maintenance & Inspection	\$8,552	\$5,000	\$5,500	
5530	Other Maintenance & Repair	\$79,538	\$60,280	\$63,200	

FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST OF ARLINGTON, MA
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY26

Account number		FY 24 ACTUA	FY 25 Budget	FY26 budget	subtotals
5535	Infrastructure Maintenance	\$5,645	\$0		
5550	Groundskeeping	\$0	\$1,000	\$400	
5560	Snow Removal	\$3,690	\$4,500	\$4,500	
Religious Education - Total		\$10,283	\$12,200		\$12,975
5610	Children & Youth	\$8,739	\$8,400	\$9,175	
	Youth Group Trip Coordinator Fund	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	
5615	CORI checks	\$44	\$2,300	\$2,300	
Music - Total		\$18,516	\$22,000		\$22,000
5750	Music Committee	\$15,012	\$18,500	\$18,500	
5760	Piano Repair	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	
5790	Organ Fund set-aside	\$2,004	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Other Committees - Total		\$14,216	\$22,310		\$27,650
5801b	STAR/Adult RE	\$251	\$500	\$500	
5807	Lay Ministry	\$0	\$150	\$150	
5808b	Leadership Development	\$157	\$750	\$700	
5809	Membership	\$1,059	\$1,200	\$1,200	
5810	Parish Committee Discretionary Fund	\$3,704	\$10,000	\$9,500	
5812	Racial Justice Coordinating Committee	\$2,475	\$3,000	\$8,000	
5812b	Social Justice committee (umbrella)	\$2,247	\$3,000	\$3,000	
5815	Stewardship	\$2,278	\$3,000	\$3,000	
5819	HR Committee	\$0	\$200	\$0	
5821	Gardening	-\$762	\$510	\$250	
new	Art Committee			\$350	
5975	Welcoming Congregation (UUA LGBTQU+)	\$2,807	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Total Operating Expenses		\$278,882	269,040		280,275
Total Dues & Outreach		62,644	69,554		69,682
	Dues/Memberships/Outreach				
5910	UUA	\$40,116	\$43,704	\$44,132	
5920	MBD				

**FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST OF ARLINGTON, MA
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY26**

Account number		FY 24 ACTUA	FY 25 Budget	FY26 budget	subtotals
5962	Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries & UU U	\$600	\$250	\$250	
5965	Mass. Interfaith Power & Light	\$250	\$600	\$300	
	UU Mass Action membership		\$2,500	\$2,500	
5940	Giving First (=1/2 of plate offerings)	\$21,678	\$22,500	\$22,500	
Total Expenses		1,041,398	1,150,018		1,154,373
Repay Retained Earnings		-\$60,000			

Income					
4100	<i>Total Pledges</i>	\$730,993	\$787,000	\$794,000	
4200	Plate Offerings (including Giving First)	\$43,413	\$45,000	\$45,000	
4720	Trustees' contribution - capital reserve fund	\$60,555	\$60,280	\$63,200	
4730	Agnes Whitman Damon Wellington Fund	\$26,931	\$22,500	\$28,000	
4525	Social Justice Fundraisers (Pie Palace)	\$2,873	\$4,500	\$4,500	
4310	Volunteer Fundraising (inc. HMF)	\$26,615	\$16,000	\$16,000	
4410	User Donations/Rental Fees: R.E. wing	\$54,273	\$58,800	\$60,270	
4420	User Donations/Rental Fees: All Others	\$44,267	\$35,000	\$35,000	
4510	Parking spaces	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	
4511	Solar Income	\$5,575	\$4,200	\$4,200	
4520	One-time Gifts (second minister fund)	\$28,000	\$26,000	\$14,000	
4520b	One-time gifts (other)	\$8,044	\$14,500	\$10,000	
4600	Interest on NOW Acct	\$8,790	\$7,000	\$7,000	
4540	<i>Non-recurrent income from surplus</i>	\$60,000	\$63,238	\$67,203	
Total Income		\$1,106,328	1,150,018		1,154,373
Surplus /(Deficit)		\$4,931			
		\$0			

Appendix I: Minutes from First Parish's Annual Meeting, May 18, 2024

(In person in the sanctuary and online via Zoom)

Minutes from First Parish's Annual Meeting on May 19, 2024

Location: 630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476 and online via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 PM by the Moderator (David Whitford). The clerk (Joanna Pushee) declared that a quorum was present. There were 128 members in attendance.

The Moderator sought a vote to approve special rules for this meeting: For presenters invited by the Parish Committee:

- Presenters recognized by the Moderator were limited to 4 minutes including a main motion, if any.
- Speakers in debate of motions were limited to 1 minute each.
- The Parish Committee chair requested written ballots for two motions to be made in this meeting by *ad hoc* committees, as noted in the warrant.

The Moderator stated that a two-thirds majority to agree to these special rules was needed and asked for a motion.

Carolyn Hodges moved to approve these special rules for this meeting. Annette Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was adopted with unanimous consent.

The Moderator recognized the Parish Committee chair (Anne Quaadgras) to provide a perspective on the previous year. The Parish Committee chair spoke on how First Parish is thriving.

Online voting was explained by the Zoom host (Jason Merrill) to members on Zoom. **Article I:**

To receive reports

The Moderator announced that the Warrant was in the packet with the Annual Reports. The minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting were included in the packet on pages 88-97.

A motion was requested to accept the reports. The motion was made by Anne Quaadgras and Seconded by John Anderson. The vote was unanimous. The Moderator declared Article I disposed of.

The clerk (Joanna Pushee) read the names of the 18 new members who joined First Parish since the last Annual Meeting.

Betty Bredin
James Brooks
Katherine (Kat) Cass
Tom Denton
Debora Diggins
Judy Dyer
Jeanne Feeley
Jessica Hamerly
Audrey Lewis
Brian Miller
Bev Morse
Francis O'Donovan
Stephen Pillemar
Mara Prentiss
Lindsey Reider Kim
Helen Rasmussen
Catherine Slesnick
Carol Wintle

The Moderator recognized the chair of the Leadership Development Committee (LDC).

Article II: Electing officers

The chair of the Leadership Development Committee (Helene Newberg) described the process of electing officers and explained that First Parish's bylaws require a written vote. John Anderson and Sara Galantowicz served as runners to collect the paper ballots. There were no nominations from the floor.

The first ballot was for the Parish Committee members:

Steve McMullin (first term ends 2025)
Susan Moore (first term ends 2026)
Kate Tranquada (first term ends 2027)
Al Tosti (2nd term ends 2027)

For officers: the roles of the Treasurer, Assistant treasurer, and auditor:

Treasurer: Carolyn Hodges (2nd term ends 2027)
Assistant Treasurer: Annie Hewitt (term ends 2025)
Auditor: Pam Linov (second term ends 2027)

The clerk will receive the ballots. The runners will bring the totals to the clerk.

A First Parish member made a point of information about Zoom voting. The Zoom host needs to run the second poll for officers by stopping the first poll and then starting the second one.

The motion to elect officers was made by Helen Newberg. Anne Quaadgras seconded the motion.

The motion was tabled until the votes were counted.

Standing Committees

The Moderator asked whether there were any nominations from the floor for standing committees. There were no nominations from the floor.

A First Parish member made a point of information about whether the terms were 3-year terms. The default term length is three years unless otherwise specified.

There are no contested seats. There is no requirement in the First Parish bylaws to vote in writing for standing committees. Therefore, the nominees will be elected by the members in person by voice vote and by yes/no polls on Zoom.

Al Tosti made a motion to accept the slate of candidates for standing committees. Tom Estabrook seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Finance:

Lissa McBurney (2nd term ends 2027)

Human Resources:

Kay Snowden (1 year term, 2024 - 2025)

Sara Galantowicz (2024 - 2027)

Leadership Development:

Kiki Giatis (2nd term ends 2027)

Membership:

Lois Fine (2024 - 2027)

Jerry Silberman (2024 - 2027)

Music:

Robin Baker (two-year term: 2024 - 2026)

Heidi Swarts (2024 - 2027)

Property:

Mara Prentiss (2024 - 2027)

Lori Kenshaft (two-year term ends 2026)

Aaron Kitzmiller (2nd term ends 2027)

David Dreyfus (2nd term ends 2027)

Religious Education

Katherine Cass (2024 - 2027)

Social Justice:

Tish Miller (2024 - 2027)

Stewardship:

(No write-ins)

Trustees of Trust Funds:

Bob Fowkes (2024 - 2027)

Alan Schweitzer (2nd term ends 2027)

Martha Pereli (2nd term ends 2027)

The moderator declared article II disposed of except for the officers.

Article III: Receiving the financial reports

The Moderator (David Whitford) explained the handout with the QR codes for viewing the proposed budget. The members were instructed to point their phone cameras at the codes and click on the bitly links for the Financial Reports Summary (2 pages) and the Budget only (3 pages). For Zoom participants, the QR codes appeared on the slide deck presentation.

An oral report was made by the Treasurer (Carolyn Hodges) with the use of slides.

- First Parish is in a favorable position and is running under the proposed budget. - First Parish committees are doing well and spending fewer funds than expected. - The Property Committee of First Parish has been doing great work [Applause].
- Highlights of that work included: repairing the dishwasher, maintaining plumbing, and handling pest control.
- Revenue is expected to exceed the budget. Gratitude was expressed to First Parish's members. Special thanks to those who ran the pie palace and chili booths at Town Day. - Regarding rentals: the enrollment, and therefore the rent, of the primary tenant, Adventures in Montessori, is a little low, but it is offset by other renters.
- The second minister fund is showing on track.
- When First Parish comes under budget, we balance last year's budget by borrowing money from ourselves, and we repair it.

Open discussion:

- A First Parish member asked about the second minister's fund. The Treasurer answered that First Parish has one more year with that fund.

There was no live oral report from the auditor or the Trustees. Parishioners can reach out to the auditor or Trustees by email. Contact information is in the Workings Booklet.

A motion to receive the financial reports was made by Annette Sawyer. The motion was seconded by Al Tosti. The motion was approved and was unanimous.

Article IV: The proposed budget

The Moderator (David Whitford) recognized the Parish Committee chair (Anne Quaadgras) to introduce the next article: the proposed budget for fiscal year 24-25 as presented by the Treasurer.

The Moderator recognized the Treasurer (Carolyn Hodges) to present the proposed budget.

The Treasurer described how First Parish is planning to budget for the upcoming year and presented a balanced budget. First Parish is self-funded.

The Treasurer explained the expenses including salaries and benefits; then she explained the revenues such as rents from tenants. For staff salaries and benefits, the Parish Committee had voted to align with the Unitarian Universalist Association guidelines for personnel. There is a

new Music Director who will soon be hired. There is an intergenerational joy fund. UU Mass Action was highlighted. At this point, the Treasurer's time of four minutes was completed.

Questions and Discussion:

A First Parish member commended the Finance Committee and Treasurer for doing an incredible job of fiduciary responsibility and management. He asked about building costs for the infrastructure line item. The costs for that item go to the meeting house building's maintenance.

Another First Parish member asked about the endowment how the endowment works. The Treasurer replied that the Trustees meet annually and look at the performance and determine the rate at which they can fund the operating on a five-year cycle. The number is based on a percentage of assets. Phil Speare and Julie Dunn of the Trustees: The percentage in the Wellington fund assets is a percentage of total assets, not earned. It is sustainable for growth of the funds while also being able to do the operations. First Parish does use the endowment to fund such things as the ministers' housing.

A discussion about the ministers' housing continued with another First Parish member commenting that First Parish had sold the parsonage and is using the funds obtained from that.

There is about \$260,950 in the general reserve balance.

First Parish has about \$135,000 marked for the two months' worth of expenses that would be used in case of emergency to keep things running (this amount changes every year and is calculated to ensure the community thrives).

The Treasurer added the trends have been running as expected and First Parish has not had to make major changes. Revenues have been increasing.

The Treasurer thanked the Finance Committee. [Applause]

MODERATOR:

Anne Quaadgras made a motion to accept the proposed budget as submitted. John Anderson seconded the motion. The vote was approved unanimously as a voice vote in person and by poll on Zoom.

Article IV was taken off the table by Carolyn Hodges. The motion was seconded. The clerk confirmed that the slate of officers was approved. There were 121 votes in favor.

The Moderator declared that Article II was disposed of.

The Moderator declared that Article IV was disposed of.

Article V: Reckoning & Repair affirmation

The Moderator explained that only First Parish members may speak on this topic, asked the

members of the Reckoning & Repair committee to stand or wave, and then the Moderator recognized Tom Estabrook to speak at 1:02 P.M.

First Parish member Tom Estabrook thanked the Moderator and introduced himself. Tom explained the process that the Reckoning & Repair working group started, including monthly meetings, listening groups, the research by Rev. Erica Richmond that led to programming and a writing subgroup. The working group learned that over half of the original families who owned pews were enslavers. The writing subgroup created an affirmation to address the past slavery and institutionalized racism and to engage in racial justice and antiracism.

Tom Estabrook moved that First Parish adopt the Affirmation of Reckoning and Repair as a guidance document for First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington to begin reckoning with past entanglements with slavery and committing to repair. The motion was seconded by John Anderson.

The Moderator explained that the motion opened for discussion and that the timer would be used along with cues when there is fifteen seconds remaining before the buzzer sounds.

Two microphones were set up on stands at the front of the sanctuary.

Speakers lined up at the “for” and “against” microphones beginning at 1:06 PM.

A First Parish member spoke at the “for” microphone about being touched by the speaker for Alliance Sunday (Dr. Curry) and about opening her heart with the affirmation to move forward.

A First Parish member spoke at the “against” microphone and explained a perspective that the affirmation was anti-universalist and against our principles.

The clerk stated that First Parish members who could not be in attendance at the Annual Meeting in person could submit a written statement to the clerk before the meeting and a selection of the statements would be read. The clerk received two written statements that were “for” the affirmation and read one of them.

A First Parish member spoke at the “against” microphone and expressed disappointment that these efforts focused on the people who owned slaves and those who gave pews to the owners.

Another First Parish member, standing on the “against” side, stated the need “to be doing things” and not using this research as a reason to be doing things.

A First Parish member stated he was pleased to attend a meeting at Old South Church among social justice communities and their experience of reparations, how these communities are coming to terms with history; across differences in religion; the vision of working together was a highlight.

A First Parish member on the opposite side expressed being conflicted and that while not against the resolution, he felt perplexed.

A First Parish member on the “for” side spoke to what it means to value the lives of the enslaved persons such as Dinah and Kate who were owned by the pew-owning families. Adopting the resolution would be First Parish’s first step to honoring them. The First Parish member wants to pass down to her children a model of truth-telling and to acknowledge past wrongs.

A First Parish member who stood at the “against” mic echoed a previous congregant’s feeling of being convicted. She said she would love to see the congregation focus “on our own time” and what is causing racial issues now, we might have a better understanding.

A First Parish member who stood at the “for” mic mentioned the time when First Parish voted to be a Welcoming Congregation, to be welcoming to LGBT people. The committee that shepherded that was not confident that the motion would pass. She drew a comparison to the Reckoning and Repair committee, being on the right side of history, and affirming our commitment to anti-racism.

A First Parish member spoke “for” the resolution spoke with the perspective of being on the Religious Education committee and seeing how children absorb the actions and sentiments of adults. She stated she was proud to be part of the FP community, searching and learning about the brutal history of slavery and the communal responsibility.

A First Parish member spoke about intersectionality among racism, sexism, and classism. Inequalities are not just part of our past but part of our present.

A First Parish member stood at the “for” microphone and stated he had not planned on speaking today, but for the last few decades he has worked with youth in Boston and other cities. He said that this is an extremely important vote. Some young people have understood how slavery has impacted their lives and some have not; how slavery has established our economy. It is important that we do something in a tangible and symbolic way.

First Parish member Maggie Carey called the question. Anne Quaadgras seconded.

Tom Estabrook had moved that First Parish adopt the Affirmation of Reckoning and Repair as a guidance document for First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington to begin reckoning with past entanglements with slavery and committing to repair.

Point of order: a First Parish member asked if this vote could be a voice vote. Among the special considerations set at the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator had said that the vote would be written.

The paper ballots, on blue paper, were collected by runners Carolyn Hodges and John Anderson around 1:22 PM.

Thanking Volunteers

In previous years, thanking volunteers typically happened at the beginning of the annual

meeting. This year, per the approved warrant as adopted by the Parish Committee, thanking people was moved to after Article V so that the votes could be counted.

The Moderator recognized the Parish Committee chair, (Anne Quaadgras). Anne stated that she has the joyful job of thanking people who have served on standing committees.

Among the many dedicated volunteers that were included, Anne highlighted Sara Galantowicz who had served for six years on the Parish Committee. Sara also organized the Taste of First Parish fundraiser with great local food and fun. It was incredibly successful. Funds were shared with World Central Kitchen, in the model set up similar to Giving First, where half the funds go towards the work of First Parish and the other half to an organization which shares many of our same values.

The Parish Committee chair thanked Celia Weislo who had been clerk and who continues to volunteer and participate in FP activities. She has been an inspiration.

Thank you to Shay Crawford who had kept things in the right place at the right time as Assistant Treasurer.

Eric Segal and Cathy Dove – please stand up. Thank you to Cathy Dove for your work on the Finance Committee.

Thank you to Maggie Carey and Diane Barry who served on the Human Resources Committee.

Gratitude was expressed to leaders who have developed other great leaders: members from the Leadership Development Committee who have ended their terms are: Helene Newberg, Georgia Cristley, and Amy Fradella.

Thank you to Maryann Kirkbride on the Membership committee.

Thank you to Alice (Austin) Panniello who served as co-chair on the Music Committee.

Thanks to John Galantowicz of the Property Committee [Big round of applause]. John was looking around the meeting house just yesterday.

Thank you to Stewardship folks, especially Marie Meteer.

Trustees – Annette Sawyer and Phil Speare are completing their terms: thank you. Steve McMullin and Reiner Dressler, thank you for serving on the Property Committee. Thank you to outgoing Worship Associates: Elizabeth Hunter and Ruben Hopwood.

The Parish Committee chair continued by thanking people who have left or joined First Parish, particularly Sara Hidalgo who was on staff as the office manager, Jose Feraz who was the part-time sexton and who left earlier in the year. First Parish has welcomed people who joined the First Parish staff such as welcoming back Minister of Religious Education Stevie Carmody [applause] who joined in August, as well as Daniel Parsley who has come in as

interim music director. First Parish welcomed Ebiere Omoregie as the new office manager. Emily as new assistant for RE. Jacqueline De Jesus is our new sexton. If we didn't have our staff, we couldn't do much of anything that we do.

Thank you to those who served on the search committee which brought the interim music director, Daniel Parsley: Alice Panniello, Robin Baker, Bob Rowlands, Paul Franzosa, Carol Seitz, and Carolyn Hodges.

The Parish Committee acknowledged the Minister of Religious Education transition committee and the Joy Committee. [Big applause]

Thank you to all the volunteers who help with the Harvest Moon Fair and Aaron Kitzmiller. [Lots of applause].

Thank you to the folks on the Ferry Beach committee.

Gratitude to volunteers on the Committee on Ministry, the Lay Ministers, and the Wider Network of Care.

The Moderator recognized the clerk who reported the results of the Reckoning & Repair affirmation: There were 107 “yes” votes, 17 “no” votes, and 5 abstentions. The vote passed in favor.

Article VI: UUA Delegates

The Moderator recognized the Parish Committee chair to introduce the next agenda item: the UUA Delegates. This is a motion that First Parish does every year.

To see if the members will authorize the Parish Committee to appoint lay and ministerial delegates to represent First Parish at meetings of the Unitarian Universalist Association and any other organizations requiring representation of the church.

Anne Quaadgras moved that the members appoint UUA. The motion was seconded by Lois Fine. There was no discussion.

The moderator took a voice vote for members in person and a yes/no poll was conducted on Zoom.

The vote passed.

Article VII: Land Acknowledgement

The Moderator explained the next article would be the Land Acknowledgement which was proposed by the Indigenous Justice Working Group. The Moderator explained that the Parish committee unanimously approved the text. The Moderator explained that only members may speak on this topic. The Moderator recognized Elizabeth Hunter of the IJWG to speak.

1:39 PM - Elizabeth Hunter introduced herself as one of the First Parish Worship Associates and as part of the IJWG. She indicated to the members that they had the text of the motion and acknowledgement.

Elizabeth Hunter, as a member of the IJWG, explained the background and process of how the Land Acknowledgment came to be. The IJWG has worked with other First Parish committees and has been working to support Indigenous organizations. First Parish has supported six Indigenous organizations to date throughout the last two years.

The IJWG has held workshops and listening sessions providing opportunities for First Parish congregants to learn about being in the right relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The IJWG has worked with Indigenous consultants. The Land Acknowledgement would be a public acknowledgment.

Elizabeth Hunter moved that First Parish vote to adopt this proposed land acknowledgement. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Hodges.

The Moderator invited First Parish members to speak at the “for” and “against” microphones.

Discussion:

A First Parish member stated gratitude to be in a community that accepts diverse opinions. He stated that he was conflicted on the issues.

A First Parish member stated that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) called on us to research, identify, and find ways to act in solidarity. The Land Acknowledgement would be a formal announcement of First Parish’s engagement and ongoing journey of work centered in discipline of love.

A First Parish member spoke against the motion as he found it to be anti-Universalist and a blank check. He wished we focused on the people alive today.

A First Parish member and chair of the IJWG acknowledged a need for healing and for recognizing the people who were dispossessed of their land. The acknowledgement would be a reminder of perspectives to be honored.

A First Parish member called attention to Indigenous and indigenous and at first moved that the two times the Indigenous is used it be made lowercase. (James Brooks) Seconded, but then James Brookes withdrew his motion after discussion.

The capital “I” is used in current academic circles
The chair of the IJWG, Ellen Leigh, verified that the “I” is used in academic circles now; it may have been lowercase in the past.

There must be a vote. Seeing no further interest; the moderator asked for a voice vote. There were no affirmative votes. The “nays” have it. Agreement to keep the text as is.

A First Parish member spoke in favor of the Land Acknowledgement. She asked what is next and how we learn to be related to each other and to the land. She wants to be part of history that was not taught in school. She spoke in favor of initiating the conversation in our community by passing the Land Acknowledgement.

Carolyn Hodges called the question. It was seconded.

The moderator asked for all those in favor of calling the question. They have it to call the question.

Voting on the Land Acknowledgement is by paper in person and via yes/no poll via Zoom.

The Moderator recognized the Parish Committee chair who recognized Rev. Erica as speaker who invited the members of First Parish to participate in a brief stretching break once the collectors of the ballots were collecting the green papers around 1:54 PM.

The Parish Committee chair thanked Rev. Erica Richmond for the stretching exercise. The Parish Committee chair continues earlier remarks on thanking volunteers.

Thank you to: Covenant Groups, Religious Education teachers [applause], the musicians and our bell choir.

The Parish Committee chair highlighted the partner church in Romania, along with the Jewish Connections group, the Memorial Garden and all of the volunteers who tend other gardens and plant bulbs, water, and weed. The bakers and “kitchen ministry” folks were thanked along with everyone who helped organize, set up, host, and clean up the potlucks on Wednesday nights.

The Moderator recognized the clerk (Joanna Pushee) who reported the results of the Land Acknowledgement: There were 119 votes in favor; 7 votes against; and 1 written abstention.

The Land Acknowledgement vote passed.

The Moderator recognized the chair of the Parish Committee to conclude her thank you presentation.

The Parish Committee chair thanked The Alliance and all its volunteers, the Wednesday Night Chapel folks who engage in prayer and meditation on Zoom on certain Wednesday nights with Rev. Erica Richmond, and the STAR Committee with its 15+ programs over the last year with drew in over 560 participants. [Applause]

The Parish Committee chair stated that there were three more slots for potlucks this summer which start in June. We have other ways to connect as well such as through the Google Group “FP Connection Board” which has over 400 people.

The Parish Committee chair acknowledged that there were five memorials this program year,

three weddings, and dedications for four children.

The Moderator asked if any member has additional lawful business at this time. There being none, the Moderator recognized Rev. Marta Flanagan and ceded the podium to her.

Rev. Marta Flanagan commended the members in attendance at the annual meeting for being a vital religious community and for adopting two resolutions aimed at living our faith. Rev. Marta expressed how proud she was of the congregation for these resolutions, particularly that these votes were not unanimous.

Rev. Marta remarked that the Land Acknowledgement passed with approximately 90% of the members present in favor; the Reckoning and Repair Working Group affirmation passed with just over 80% of the members present in favor.

Rev. Marta stated that the congregation is proving that we can be together and speak our truths. She invited those present to “give a shout of joy” for what has been accomplished. She invited all to stand and greet each other.

MOTION to ADJOURN:

The clerk (Joanna Pushee) moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by John Anderson. The meeting adjourned at 2:07 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Congregational Benediction:

May faith in the spirit of life,

Hope for the community of Earth,

And Love of the sacred in one another

Be ours now, and in all the days to come.

Minutes prepared by Joanna Pushee, volunteer clerk.