

Parish Committee Meeting Minutes

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington

June 16, 2026 7:00 - 9:36 PM via Zoom

Attendees: Marie Meteer (Chair), Carolyn Hodges (Treasurer), Joanna Pushee (Clerk), Ellen Robie, John Shriver, Al Tosti, Kate Tranquada

Ministers: Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong, Interim Lead Minister; Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education

Guests: Katherine Fleming (Settled Minister Search Committee) and Elizabeth Hunter (Transition Team)

7:05 **Call to Order** (Marie)

7:06 **Reading and Chalice Lighting** (Al)

7:10 **Financial Review** (Carolyn)

- First Parish is in great shape. There will be some expected expenses in June as usual.
- First Parish will use less of the surplus budgeted: about \$67,000 was budgeted and about \$49,000 is anticipated to be used.
- Pledges are rebounding. First Parish is at 2.5% below plan. This year, First Parish has seen more folks reply and reduce pledges because their financial circumstances have changed. This change is not surprising due to the wider economic situation across the country.
- Assistant Treasurer Annie Hewitt is doing great work with reminders to members to complete their pledges before June 30.
- Scorecard template:
 - Income:
 - Town of Arlington and Parking: The Town owes First Parish payment for May and June and is on track to pay by June 30.
 - The nursery school is on track. Adventures in Montessori is paying First Parish in advance for the pass through cost of cleaning.
 - Revenue is good.
 - The Property Committee is digging into the solar panels calculation and activity.
 - Expenses:
 - Favorable in most categories with some known overages. The Parish Committee will be voting on any known overages in August.

Reckoning & Repair (R&R) Working Group request:

- The Reckoning & Repair Working Group had requested \$5,000 for 2026-2027 year as an institutional commitment.

This amount was not included in the budget. The group is asking for a one-time approval of unspent funds for fiscal year 2026-2027. It is expected that to be about \$1,800.

- This is the second year that the Reckoning & Repair Working Group had funds leftover from their programming budget.
- Committees typically do not roll over funds from one year to the next.
- R&R is working with Giving First within the Social Justice Committee umbrella on one particular Sunday as a “reparations Sunday.” If the Social Justice chair and committee agree, R&R would come back to the Parish Committee and propose a vote on a Giving First change. The R&R working group is looking at either InGathering or a date in June that is close to Juneteenth 2027.
- Questions:
 - A Parish Committee member commented on whether having one FP committee and not others be able to roll over funds would be allowed.
 - The Parish Committee is considering the request not as rolling over for programming but for taking it and using it for another purpose for an outside commitment; it is designated for reparations rather than program funding. (80% of RR funds: plan to spend; hold remainder for anything that come up; they raised and donated \$27,000 to the Roxbury Youth Program and have about \$5,000 to donate going forward.
 - RJCC is waiting for a bill regarding the indigenous justice working group budget: an art piece is being created and the artist has not yet billed First Parish.
- **Forecast (Carolyn):**
 - The Treasurer reviewed the forecast versus the budget. On the revenue side, First Parish is doing well.
 - On the expenses side, there are several overages, many of them known.
 - Small overages in categories such as life insurance, recruitment and relocation costs (note that that line item includes expenses also not related to recruitment or relocation)
 - Known overage in office bookkeeping expenses related to payroll changes, computer software and hardware, and training
 - Expected cleaning services to be over budget: Now it is through operating expenses. (Net through pass-through with the nursery school shows all caught up and we are getting a pass through)
 - The audit and audit reserve, included in training of office staff
 - Slightly over in heating costs due to the old boiler system which is being replaced this summer
 - Water bill was high; Mark Wilke of Property has diagnosed the situation and identified the problem was in the Bailey Room

- Property folks continue to dig into the relationship between electric bill, solar panels, and the solar power agreements. First Parish owns two sets of solar panels and we rent one set as we understand it.
- First Parish is slightly over in snow removal due to more snow than expected compared to previous years
- Over in gardening due to mulch cost being higher than expected
- UUA program fund is a known overage; ParCom had voted on this in the fall when we got the bill
- RE salary budget: running over for one position - Religious Education Assistant
Bella J. worked additional hours while Rev. Stevie was away; these hours were not anticipated, but very much welcomed by the evening programs and the Sunday morning programs. These hours helped Rev. Emily and volunteer teachers.
 - When Rev. Stevie is here, the average is 17.5 hours for this position; however, the average was 22.3 hours when Rev. Stevie was on leave. It is about 4 hours over per week; it was an unplanned cost, but a cost of coverage for the parental leave. Rev. Stevie has negotiated for 50 additional hours to finish out the year, turnover, planning for the next year. That would be additional \$1,250.

It has yet to be determined which bucket this amount would come from. However, salary cost overall is under budget as mentioned by Rev. Jonipher.

- RE programming budget has a surplus, but the Parish Committee does not directly take funds from program to salary.
- RE is about \$2,600 under budget; CORI cost is running under budget (this more than covers the overage experienced).
- Typically, the Parish Committee does not move money around, because it distorts year to year; The recommendation from the Treasurer is to not ask to move the money between the two accounts.
- Racial Justice discussion
Within the Social Justice Committee umbrella is the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee. There are working groups such as the Reckoning & Repair Working Group and the Indigenous Justice Working Group.

ParCom would not commit to approving anything more than what R&R would end up with at the end of the program year (maximum amount of their favorable variance); Social Justice will also be slightly over budget (have not factored in

approximately \$750 for art; would be maybe up to \$1,000 under (as in leftover in their budget).

MOTION 1: I move favorable action for using the remaining Reckoning & Repair funds for their commitment to the Roxbury Youth Program (AI). Seconded (Marie) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

The Parish Committee voted in unanimous consent in favor of the motion with two members not present. The Parish Committee encourages the Reckoning & Repair Working Group to tighten their budgeting process so they do not have leftover funds at the end of each program year.

7:38 PM **Consent agenda items**

MOTION 2: I move we accept the consent agenda (Kate) Seconded (Carolyn) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

7:38 PM **Short reports from Exec & Parish Committee Portfolios**

- **Update on the Front Corner Project (AI)**
 - Over 40 people attended the most recent meeting; Thank you to Carolyn White for the support with the online session for the Corner Project: About 8-10 households were online.
 - Note that Sanjay Newton has resigned from the Corner Project group.
 - Merging option 1 and option 2 provided by the architects; Meeting on June 30 to finalize the design
 - We have asked the architects about dividing the project in two phases over a couple of years.
 - Tearing down the walls on the side and front will be a dramatic change to the look of the meeting house
 - Elements of shade, planting, and maintenance are being included
 - Early September is the aim for a presentation of a final plan for the congregation; AI T will talk to Kate T about room reservation.
 - Community Development grant money and accessibility
 - Bring back horse trough for a historical element.
 - Moving towards a consolidated plan now.

Realm improvement tasks for Allison (Amy & Susan) - with Joanna: meeting over the summer to discuss member categories on the inactive member list and discuss any duplicates or clean-up needed in Realm. The chair decided to table this discussion until after Amy, Susan, and Joanna meet as both Amy and Susan were not in attendance. Amy, Susan, and Joanna met on June 24; Joanna and Marie meeting in July.

7:43 PM - **Communications Task Force update** (Kate Tranquada & Elizabeth Hunter)

- The Parish Committee created a Communications Task Force to dive into how current communications avenues are working and to ensure smooth communications across key committees during the transition.
- The Communications Task Force submitted a draft progress report to the Parish Committee.
- Kate Tranquada has held one-on-one meetings with David Whitford (Settled Minister Search Committee), Tina Schultz (Covenanting), the First Parish communications associate Allison Sillers and others.

Transition Team: 3 areas of communication identified

Content: The Transition Team will need help prioritizing content and highlighted that Rev. Marta Flanagan used to provide essential guidance to office staff; however, our communications associate is doing a great job. There is a need to identify who is in charge of prioritizing content: for example, chairs of committees come together monthly.

Mechanics: There is a need to figure out processes and train new committee chairs. The Communications Task Force can do a lot of this work. There are new committee chairs, and we want to provide informational documents.

Relational aspect: For impact and emotion

Regarding emotional impact, the Transition Team can pay attention and help people with responses to communications.

7:49 PM - **Questions / Comments**

- A ParCom member asked about *The Spire* and how to more widely distribute it. In the past, paper copies were placed on seats in the sanctuary.
 - Allison Sillers and Diane Shriver have spoken about putting articles on the website in easily accessible places. Articles could be shared.
- Blog? (Elizabeth Hunter)
- A Parish Committee member pointed out that this upcoming year will be different and some regular activities may not happen. This message needs to be communicated consistently and clearly.
- Rev. Jonipher started speaking with committees such as the Worship Associates.
- Some committees have started setting goals of having more events, but this year will not be the year to start on those goals.
- A Parish Committee member commented on the short time between InGathering and the congregational meeting for covenanting in October.

Katherine Fleming arrived around 7:52 PM

7:57 PM **Bylaws Task Force** (John)

Parish Committee member John Shriver provided an oral report on behalf of the bylaws task force.

- The bylaws task force is meeting on June 29 to further discuss needs and requirements for hybrid congregational meetings.
 - Software packages for ballots; Tish Miller is looking into options.
 - Camera issues: Robert's Rules of Order recommends that everyone should be able to see each other (in-person and virtual). First Parish does not have the technology to do that, and we have members who would refuse to attend the meeting in person if their face would be seen online.

Questions / Comments:

- Joanna pointed out that there are notes from Zoom voting in the 2024 annual meeting folder in the Google shared drive.
- A Parish Committee member underlined that members could attend a congregational meeting online but that that is different from proxy voting. There is no proxy voting allowed.
- A Parish Committee member asked if the bylaw change would have to be done in program year 2026-27.
 - The ParCom chair pointed out that there may be some aspects that a new minister would be a part of in terms of bylaw changes and suggestions. However, especially for parents who are First Parish members, there is a need to be able to participate online. A review is important this year. Addressing the hybrid issue is a commitment that ParCom would like to make to increase participation.
- **Preschool - Status of the lease** (Ellen) - 8:05 PM.
Ellen is the ParCom point person for Adventures in Montessori and has reached out to First Parish office staff for an update on AIM's signing of the lease.
- **UUA fees** (Carolyn and Susan) - 8:06 PM
Carolyn will talk to Marie. There will be a meeting with Norrie Gall [Congregational Giving Administrative Director for the UUA] sometime in July.
- **Overprogramming and entering settled minister search year:**
Saving some dates, how to manage (Kate) - we talked about this earlier.

8:07 - 8:09 PM **Brief Break**

8:09 PM **State of the Parish** (Rev. Jonipher & Rev. Stevie)

Rev. Jonipher submitted a written report. Highlights included:

- Minister portfolios
 - Widen Rev. Stevie's lane with broader faith formation.
 - STAR Adult Ed and Lectio Divina are added to Rev. Stevie's portfolio.
 - Part of the evaluation process will include input from the RE and STAR Committees.
 - Rev. Jonipher will be taking on Stewardship and Shared Ministry
 - They already have the Leadership Development Committee as part of their portfolio. Leadership is part of the Five Interim Tasks.
- Rev. Jonipher highlighted the HR Committee report calling for making First Parish more inclusive towards its staff, including correct pronoun use.
- For First Parish's challenge of overprogramming: the recommendation is to weave programs into existing structures.

8:12 PM **Rev. Stevie** - submitted a written report.

- Rev. Stevie provided a graphic to explain faith formation including covenanting, exploring identities, and potentially a conflict resolution workshop via STAR.
 - There are deep reasons that people might be seeking spiritual deepening and community building this program year. Covenanting within small groups will be easier for groups to give feedback.
 - The UUA's workshop Break Barriers, Build Beliefs (B4) is a UUA offering that expands the sense of who we are as a congregation during transition.
- Rev. Stevie provided a proposal for an Adult OWL program possibly for 2027.

8:21 PM **Settled Minister Search Committee** (Katherine Fleming)

- The Settled Minister Search Committee has met three times and has identified which members will take on which roles.
 - Betsy Carlton-Gysan and Katherine Fleming: co-chairs
 - David Whitford: communications point person
 - Anne Quaadgras: treasurer
 - Genevieve Baldwin is drafting the group's covenant.
 - Betsy will also be the UUA liaison.
- The committee will do a retreat with a UUA person this summer. The UUA roadmap for the calendar dates for 2026-2027 has been released.
- The committee is working on dates for congregational surveys for the fall.

Questions?

- Rev. Jonipher shared that the calendar shows a slightly later date for the spring, which is beneficial considering the Massachusetts school vacation week in April.
- The Parish Committee mentioned the ParCom fall retreat: Sept. 12th

- There was a question about the UUA summer retreat and the B4 program: it is separate but connected. The B4 program is a UUA workshop for congregations going through a ministerial transition.

Kay Snowden (TT) entered before 8:25 pm. Rev. Stevie, Rev. Jonipher, and Katherine Fleming left around 8:30 PM.

8:30 **Executive session with Transition Team**

Motion 3: I move we enter into executive session and invite Transition Team member representatives Elizabeth Hunter and Kay Snowden (Kate) Seconded (John S.) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

9:34 PM - **Motion 4:** I move we leave executive session. (Joanna) Seconded (John) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

Elizabeth Hunter and Kay Snowden left at 9:10 PM.

The Parish Committee thanked Elizabeth and Kay for the appraisal document.

9:36 PM **Adjourn**

MOTION 5: I move that we adjourn the meeting. (Carolyn) Seconded (Al) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

Motions

MOTION 1: I move favorable action for using the remaining Reckoning & Repair funds for their commitment to the Roxbury Youth Program (Al). Seconded (Marie) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 2: I move we accept the consent agenda (Kate). Seconded (Carolyn) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 3 : I move we enter into executive session and invite Transition Team member representatives Elizabeth Hunter and Kay Snowden (Kate) Seconded (John S.) 7 of 7 in favor. None opposed.

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Meeting minutes prepared by Joanna Pushee, clerk.

Interim Lead Minister's Report

June 17 - August 17, 2026

Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kūpono Kwong
First Parish UU in Arlington, Massachusetts

This has been an experimental summer for me and Rev. Erica in terms of our involvement with preaching at worship services and trying out a projection system (three hybrid services). We also coordinated study leaves/vacations so there's at least one of us around to help address pastoral care needs, eliminating the need to pay another minister in case of emergency. For me, I would describe it as a "steady rhythm summer."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Shriver, Paul Franzosa, and Bill Licea-Kane for helping make our worship experience more inclusive and accessible. We received one comment that they were able to sing for the first time in a year because they could actually read the words to the hymns! Overall, people also appreciated being able to see the images for the Time for All Ages. The setup is not intrusive at all and doesn't require a screen/monitor or any cables (it is run from an iPad), which people appreciate. There were a couple who would prefer no use of technology at all during the service. The Worship Associates will weigh all the feedback we received so far, but I would say it's been overwhelmingly positive.

We are still working on installing a monitor by the workroom to highlight events/spaces during the week and the more expensive component will be upgrading some of the sound issues. This might need to be done in phases according to priority.

I hope many of you were able to find some respite in one form or another and time to recharge your spiritual energy. We have a very full program year ahead as we wrap up this transition period and engage in the ministerial search process. I continue to be grateful for your leadership.

Heritage

- TT with help of Hilary Allen (UUA Regional Staff) talked through challenging issues/conflict they've observed from the congregation and amongst the team.

Leadership

- Shared Ministry and Transition Team both added Tom Estabrook as a new member.

Connection

- Continued to be in regular contact with Hilary Allen and consulted with Jan Gartner from the UUA about a confidentiality form.
- Helped put together and collaborated with interfaith clergy and our own Defending Democracy group for Prayers for Liberty in Lexington/Concord during the 250th anniversary of the founding of the USA.

Mission/Vision

-

Future

- Worship planning and overall calendar planning.

Conflict & Trust

- I preached on a couple of covenant-related issues this summer, including accountability and how to deal with conflict and anger.
- The Covenanting Task Force met and solidified their plans leading up to the vote on October 25th. There will be a “reveal” in September for the proposed covenant. Stay tuned for that!

Interdependently Yours,
Rev. Jonipher



Key upcoming dates:

9/12	ParCom/TT/Search Committee Retreat
9/13	Ingathering/Water Communion Sunday
9/13	Lay Leadership Roundtable
9/25-27	Ferry Beach weekend
9/27	Covenant Reveal in person
9/29	Covenant Reveal virtually

Attendance:

Date	Total	Preacher	Title
6/14	202	Rev. Carolyn	"Faith in Loving Fiercely"
6/21	50	Diane Taraz	"Good Trouble"
6/28	88	Rev. Jonipher	"Journey Toward Collective Liberation"
7/5	64	Loren Gomez	"Faith in Each Other"
7/12	74	Rev. Erica	"Counting Acorns"
7/19	62	Elizabeth Hunter	"How to Worship"

7/26	81	Rev. Jonipher	"We're All to Blame"
8/2	63	David Dreyfus	"Living w/ Climate Change"
8/9	72	Rev. Erica	"Whose America?"

Pastoral care provided:

Office/Home visit: 5

Commitment Ceremony: 1

Staff and Lay Leadership support provided:

Appointments with lay leaders regarding projects and committee work: 12

Committee meetings attended:

- *ParCom Exec: 6/23, 8/4*
- *Transition Team: 7/26*

Weekly individual meetings (more sporadic):

- *Parish Minister: Rev. Erica Richmond*
- *MRE: Rev. Stevie Carmody*
- *Office Manager: Ebiere Omoregie*

Community and Denominational Activities

- *Individual meeting with UU ministerial colleagues: 6*
- *Prayers for Liberty: 7/3*
- *Clergy Press Conference in Maine for ICE shooting: 7/23*

Rev. Erica F Richmond
First Parish in Arlington Massachusetts: Parish Committee Report
August 18, 2026

On July 1st, I returned from the first part of my Sabbatical. It was a nourishing time of travel, weekly meditation, reading, and family time.

Since then, it has been a busy summer of reconnecting with folks and catching up on the pastoral care issues that have arisen for people this Spring.

I am grateful to Rev. Carolyn for covering my portfolio during part one and I am so glad that she is able to return to continue coverage in October.

Looking forward to Ingathering!

- Rev. Erica

Worship:

This summer Rev. Jonipher and I experimented by providing minister-led worship. Six services this summer were lay-led and six were led by myself or Rev. Jonipher.

My three summer services:

July 12th- On the spiritual lessons of boredom

August 9th- On ICE, the Fugitive Slave Act, and 250 years of America

August 23rd- Upcoming, on Mary Oliver and her poetry

Ingathering Sunday is Sunday, September 13th. I will be preaching.

Pastoral Care Provided by Minister:

(from July 1 to August 18th)

Individual pastoral sessions: 17, including a hospice facility visit

Themes: end-of-life, family dynamics, spiritual searching.

Individual meetings with committee leaders: 8

I officiated Bob McKersie's memorial service on Tuesday, August 4th at 2 pm at our meetinghouse. Over 200 people were in-person and there were at least 60 zoom log-ins. Bob was 96 years old and a well-loved pillar of our community. It was an honor to work with his family on this poignant service.

[You can read Bob's obituary here.](#)



On July 16th, an Arlington teen named Ian Sotelo-Newhall unexpectedly passed away. His mother grew up Unitarian Universalist and his maternal grandmother is a member at the First Parish in Haverhill. Because of these connections and because they live in Arlington, the family approached First Parish about hosting Ian's memorial service. I am officiating it on Sunday, September 13th at 2pm. I expect it will be well attended and I will need to ask FP volunteers to assist with ushering.

[You can read Ian's obituary here.](#)

Lay Leadership Support Provided by Parish Minister:

Defending Democracy: July 27th, regular meeting

Reckoning and Repair: July 9th

Upcoming retreats/trainings:

- August 24th, Defending Democracy Retreat
- September 12th, Lay Ministry Training
- TBD, Reckoning and Repair Retreat, sometime in September.

Programming:

Education, Spiritual Deepening, Community Building

- I am working with committee leadership to launch programming in the Fall. There is a lot going on and people are eager for support.
- I am glad to see that weekly potlucks continue to be well-attended and a source of connection over the summer.

Social Justice / Turning Outward

- Myself, Rev. Stevie, Rev. Jonipher, and several members of First Parish attended the Prayers for Liberty gathering on July 3rd on the Lexington Battle Green. Gratitude to Rev. Jonipher for speaking at this event!



- I did another shift of chaplaincy outside the ICE building in Burlington, MA. Myself, a Baptist minister, and a rabbi provided support to folks who were waiting for or leaving immigration appointments. It is a heartwrenching but powerful opportunity to be of service.



- Eric Segal and I met with folks from Welcome NST. Our congregation will be supporting a legal clinic day for Haitian immigrants in October. This is a wonderful short-term opportunity to make a difference.
- I continue to serve on the Arlington Police Civilian Advisory Commission.

Professional Development and Continuing Education:

- Continue meeting with outside supports and prioritizing self-care as needed.
- Participating in a workshop about “Returning from Sabbatical” at the beginning of September.
- I have had several 1:1s Rev. Jonipher 1:1 in July and August, our weekly meetings this Fall.

Religious Education Report

Parish Committee Meeting – August 18th, 2026

Submitted by Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education on August 14th, 2026.

Dear Parish Committee,

The summer has afforded both rest and rejuvenation (including time with Hazel, pictured here!), and the opportunity to prepare and plan for the year upcoming. Both Bella and K are mostly off for the summer, and the pause in our regular religious education program rhythm gives the opportunity for some longer-view work. This has fallen into a few buckets:

1. **Aligning** the program with the other congregational work that is prioritized this year (Transitions, Search, etc).
2. **Incorporating learnings** from the 2025-2026 program year.
3. Research and preparation of **curricula, training, and program offerings** to deepen and enhance religious education across the lifespan.



Entering year four of my work as your Minister of Religious Education, I will be especially attentive to **how volunteering in religious education is itself a spiritually-deepening experience**. Indeed, the way First Parish supports the children and youth in our community is missional work: encouraging young people on their spiritual journeys and welcoming them into the multigenerational liberal religious community we create together.

I invite you to consider with me how—for the more than 60 adult (and teen) volunteers that share their gifts in religious education—exploring Unitarian Universalism alongside young people can be a profound, spirit-filling, and educational experience. It can be one way our membership **deepens their commitment to our wider community**. It can help newcomers feel a sense of purpose.

May volunteering in religious education—as a classroom teacher, leading a STAR adult education program, facilitating comprehensive sexuality education, advising our high school youth groupers, or helping lead worship with a story for all ages—be **an experience that “fills you up,” rather than feels draining**. On the staff side, it’s our job to help make sure that balance holds: this year offering more comprehensive teacher training, finding more times for volunteers to share notes, shoring up our systems so everyone feels prepared, enhancing feedback loops and communication, and framing the larger theological grounding for what we’re doing here and why.

Thank you, Parish Committee, for “tending the whole” of our congregational governance in partnership with the ministry, so that many beautiful and meaningful experiences can grow within First Parish. What follows are some general notes about the year and the program, for your reference and orientation!

Warmly, Rev. Stevie

Sunday Morning Programs

Overview

First Parish has classes divided into six age cohorts, staffed by at least two volunteers each.

- Nursery (ages 6 months - 3 yo)
- Pre-K (ages 3-5 yo)
- Kindergarten & Grade One
- Grade Two & Grade Three
- Grade Four & Grade Five
- Grade Six & Grade Seven



We currently use all the classroom space on the second floor of the Parish House, one large classroom on the first floor (the May Room), and two spaces in the Parish House basement (our Grade 6/7 will be meeting in the Harrison room, rather than the Parlor, so that after-service programs can be set up in advance). For now, **we have enough space to run our program**.

Most Sundays are “In Term”, meaning the age cohorts are meeting by themselves. On holiday and vacation weekends, we meet “All-together” for justice education, service projects, and community building for Grades K-7.

A training for all volunteer teachers at First Parish this year will be held on **Saturday September 12th from 2p-6p**, led by Rev. Stevie and Bella. The program begins September 13th.

Evening Programs

Middle School OWL Program

The Our Whole Lives program for Seventh and Eighth graders runs from March to December with a summer break. In the fall, the rising Eighth graders will be embarking on the second half of their program.

COA Program

Coming of Age, a program for Eighth graders, will begin in January, culminating in Coming of Age Sunday on June 13th (a little later this year, our penultimate program year Sunday!).

Youth Program

Our Youth Program, coordinated by K Milano, meets regularly on Sundays. Youth Group's unique Youth Empowerment model asks high schoolers to take on shared leadership with adult oversight: decide what happens in youth group, choose the service and justice work they focus on, care for one another, and plan/lead their annual Youth worship service. This year, the Youth Group will be

focusing on welcoming our large and well-bonded rising freshman class, along with deciding what service trip to embark on in the Spring/Summer 2027. (The Youth Group band, performing at the Music & Art Benefit fundraiser this June—a very successful event raising over \$1000 for the service trip and charity—is pictured here).



Our Whole Lives Expansion

As discussed towards the end of last program year, the religious education program, in conjunction with the STAR adult education program and the rest of the ministry at First Parish, is considering how to expand the Our Whole Lives programs.

You can read more about that in this Proposal document:

[Proposal: Expanding Our Whole Lives @ FPUUA](#)

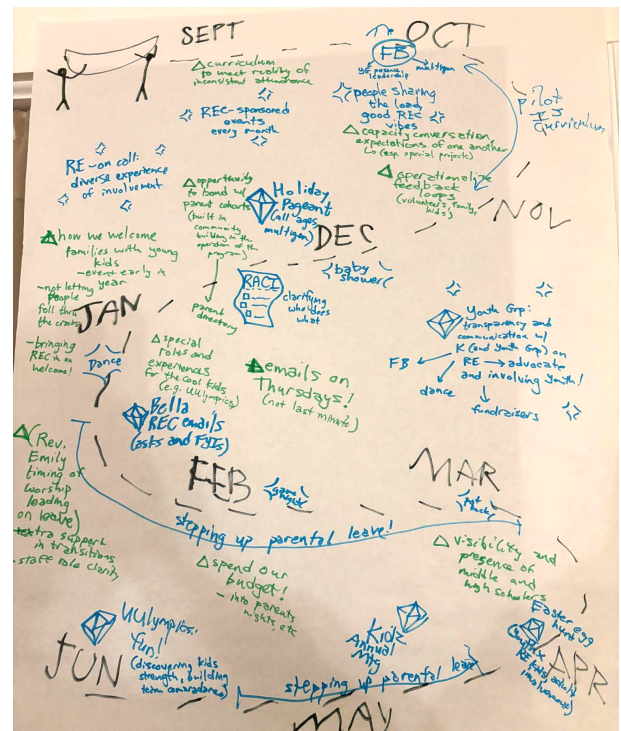
The “Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators” program is slated to launch in the Winter Term this year, via Zoom (after bedtimes). We are currently assessing the volunteer capacity, interest, and ideal timing to begin an “Older Adult OWL” program.

Religious Education Committee

The Religious Education Committee met in late June to review the past year holistically, and prepare its goals for next year. Pictured here are the “gems” (in blue) and growth areas (in green) noted at that gathering. The RE Committee, now **chaired by Kat Cass**, will meet for its beginning of the year retreat on September 9th.

The RE Committee—charged with overseeing, guiding, and supporting the First Parish religious education program to children and youth—is honing several **goals and focuses for the upcoming year**. They are especially curious about:

- How does First Parish signal & support the inclusion of children in worship?
- How does the RE program tend to middle school involvement in the wider community?
- What staffing needs does the Religious Education program have going forward, as First Parish as a whole considers its staffing structure?
- How does First Parish welcome and retain new families, especially on their pathway to involvement, membership, and leadership?



STAR Committee

The STAR Committee—currently facilitated by Maureen Dolan and Kate Lenox, and supported by Rev. Stevie—will be meeting in mid-August for a retreat to consider program offerings for the upcoming year.

Below, a sneak peak at our “fridge calendar” overview of the program year!



Updated 8/3/26

Religious Education

First Parish UU of Arlington

2026-2027 Calendar



Follow **First Parish's E-Bulletin & RE Newsletter** for the most up-to-date schedules and invitations to FP-wide happenings. The community needs your input for our covenanting and Ministerial Search processes this year!

Fall 2026

Sep 13 - In-Gathering Water Communion & R.E. Welcome Back! — OWL & YG resume

Sep 20 - Fall Term, Week #1 — OWL, YG

Sep 27 - All Together RE (K-7) @ FP; Ferry Beach weekend (incl. YG) offsite — OWL, No YG

Oct 4 - Fall Term, Week #2 — OWL, YG

Oct 11 - All Together RE (K-7) — No OWL, YG

Oct 18 - Fall Term, Week #3 — OWL, No YG (YG Lock-in 16-17th)

Oct 25 - Fall Term, Week #4 — OWL, YG

Nov 1 - Fall Term, Week #5 — OWL, YG

Nov 8 - Fall Term, Week #6 — OWL, YG

Nov 15 - Fall Term, Week #7 — OWL, YG

Nov 22 - Intergen. Worship (K-7) — OWL, YG

Nov 29 - Service Project (K-7) — No OWL, YG

Dec 6 - Fall Term, Week #8 — OWL, YG

Dec 13 - Service Project (K-7) — OWL ends, YG

Dec 20 - Intergen. Worship & Holiday Pageant (K-7) — YG

Dec 27 - No RE (Winter Holiday)

Morning Programs—PreK thru Grade 7—start at 10a in the Sanctuary, and conclude at 11:30a. Nursery Room (6 mo. - 3 y.o.) is available every week at 10a.

Evening Programs for teens—Our Whole Lives (OWL), Coming of Age (COA), Youth Group (YG)—meet at 7p.

→ **Water Communion** (9/13): bring water from a source special to you and your family.

→ **"All Together RE" Sundays** join all the grades together for justice-learning & service! Special care this year is for making sure older kids have a special role and/or program.

→ **Special Congregational Mtg** (10/25) after service.

→ **Intergenerational workshops** take the place of RE classes, with the service designed to include kids Grade K and up!

→ **Pageant** (12/20): rehearsals happen throughout Dec., open to all ages!

Children's Holiday Choir
Rehearsals:

- 11/29 (11:45a)
- 12/6 (11:45a)
- 12/13 (11:45a)
- 12/20 (9:15a)

Parent Program
"Parents as Sexuality Educators"
(via Zoom, 7:30-9p)

- Tues, Jan 12th
- Tues, Jan 26th
- Tues, Feb 9th
- Tues, Mar 2nd
- Tues, Mar 9th
- Tues, Mar 23rd



Youth Sunday (2/28):
An entirely youth-designed & -led Sunday Worship.

OWL Parent Orientation
(3/14, 7-8:30p)

Winter 2027

Jan 3 - Winter Term, Week #1 — YG

Jan 10 - Winter Term, Week #2 — COA Parent Orientation (Sp), YG

Jan 17 - All Together (K-7) — No COA, YG

Jan 24 - Winter Term, Week #3 — COA Kickoff Field Trip, YG

Jan 31 - Winter Term, Week #4 — COA, No YG (YG Lock-in 29-30th)

Feb 7 - Winter Term, Week #5 — COA, YG

Feb 14 - All Together (K-7) — No COA, YG

Feb 21 - Winter Term, Week #6 — COA, YG

Feb 28 - Winter Term, Week #7: Youth Worship! (grades 6-8 attend) — OWL Starts, COA, YG

Mar 7 - Winter Term, Week #8 — OWL, COA, YG

Mar 14 - Winter Term, Week #9 — OWL, COA, YG

Mar 21 - Winter Term, Week #10 — OWL, COA, YG

Mar 28 - Intergen. Worship & Egg Hunt (PreK-7) — No OWL, No COA, YG

Spring 2027

Apr 4 - Spring Term, Week #1 — OWL, COA, YG

Apr 11 - Spring Term, Week #2 — OWL, COA, YG

Apr 18 - All Together (K-7) — No OWL, No COA, No YG

Apr 25 - Spring Term, Week #3 — OWL, COA, YG

May 2 - Spring Term, Week #4 — OWL, COA, YG

May 9 - Spring Term, Week #5 — No OWL, No COA, No YG

May 16 - Spring Term, Week #6 — OWL, COA, YG

May 23 - Spring Term, Week #7 — OWL, COA, YG

May 30 - All Together (K-7) — No OWL, No COA, No YG (YG Lock-in 29-30th)

Jun 6 - Spring Term, Week #8 — OWL, COA, YG

Jun 13 - Spring Term, Week #9: COA Sunday! (grades 4-7 attend) — No OWL, No COA, YG

Jun 20 - UUlympics Field Day! (K-7) — No OWL, No COA, No YG

→ **Lead Minister Candidating Week** (4/25-5/2): our lead minister candidate joins us this week... with a congregational vote on 5/2 to call them!

→ **Kids Annual Mtgs / Adult Congregational Mtgs** (5/2 & 5/16, after service): while the adults do FP business, the kids practice democracy (& fun).

→ **Coming of Age Sunday** (6/13): our eighth graders share their credos.

Refold this zine!

