

# *First Parish Church, UCC*

**Date:** December, 19, 2019

**Present:** Fred Merrill, Moderator; Dee Deranian, Facilities; Cathy Pottle, Member-at-Large; Margie Ives, Stewardship; John Bartel, Member-at-Large; Anne LaDuke, Assistant Moderator; Carol Geurrin, Personnel; Joe Weaver, Missions; Pastor Deborah Roof; Anne Marie Merrill, CE; Reni Harnden, Member at Large; Ryan Lehoullier, Diaconate

**Guests:** Paul Lindemann;

**I. Opening:** Pastor Deborah

**II. Minutes:** Linda will send the minutes to members via e-mail and vote for approval.

**III. Building Rehab:**

Paul Lindemann reports that we had a successful crane day; building belfry and lantern, This should be complete early spring.

LCHIP details moving forward – waiting for steeple grant – hopefully in Jan.

## **Board Adoption Resolution**

WHEREAS, the governing Council of First Parish Congregational Church, UCC has reviewed the Land Trust Standards and Practices (“the Standards”), first published by the Land Trust Alliance in 1989, and with the most recent revision effective February 3, 2017; and,

WHEREAS, the Council agrees that the Standards are the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust or historic preservation organization;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the First Parish Congregational Church, UCC hereby adopts and commits to implementing the applicable Standards as guidelines for the organization’s historic preservation operations.

## **Discussion:**

Ryan states we do need to adopt the resolution however, implementation means we have to do some additional things. In particular, training of those doing the stewardship work needs to take place. We will also need policies in place. Paul indicates this is done via BAC by gathering individuals experienced in such endeavors. Paul feels we are following in spirit.

Motion made by Dee to approve the above, second by Cathy Pottle

All in favor adopting the standards.

Steeple grant payment/LCHIP – will request next payment at halfway point in early January. Request to postpone 2016 Roof System Rehab Grant.

## **Friends:**

Successful Santa Breakfast – Thanks to Karen Wilson!

Fundraising sale items in Doire Distillery; Four new \$1K pegs last week, more opportunities available. Establishing brokerage account to be ready to receive stock donations.

## **Nutfield 300<sup>th</sup>:**

Progress delayed due to Paul's bad health. Rallying for rapid progress after New Years.

Videos filmed months ago are done – coordinated public announcement in Mid-January. Proposing a “history party” to show videos and generate excitement for the 300<sup>th</sup>.

Deborah recommends the 20<sup>th</sup> of January for after Church video show; a Wednesday rather than Thursday may work better. Wonders if a Friday night – (January 18<sup>th</sup>?) would work. Paul to take back to committee and come up with a plan.

Paul finds it difficult to communicate to the Congregation all the great things that are happening. He suggests mounting a big screen TV in Currier to use for demonstrating information. Ann moves to place a screen up in Currier and work with facilities as to where it will go for purposes of the preservation, second by Ryan, all in favor.

**IV. Sabbatical :** Deborah withdraws her request to take a sabbatical this year. This gives back \$3,000 to the budget. If 10 more people donate 3k – we would balance the budget. Trying to think outside the box. Deborah feels there is some good communication happening in the Congregation. Bylaws dictate that a proposal be provided for Sabbatical to Council. Ryan states don't cancel due to the budget, if you are in a good place to not take sabbatical, if not – take it. Pastor Deborah energized by positive activity happening. The negative is exhausting to her. If we continue in the positive way – all that is going on positive – that was considered in decision to postpone sabbatical.

Carol proposes that in lieu of Sabbatical an added week vacation for 2019 should be offered, second by Reni.

Carol states we shouldn't dwell on it, she needs a break – we would support an added week vacation. It is a positive message to the Congregation. Fred feels we have the authority to make this decision in appreciation of Pastor giving up Sabbatical this year and recognizing the stress she has been through this past fall. Ryan feels this is a fragile step to take doing this for people rather than having processes in place to do what we want. He will not vote against, won't vote for it. We'll postpone decision until next meeting until we review the budget and contract. Carol and Reni withdrew the motion to allow time to think about this.

Pastor Deborah would like us all to e-mail thoughts about the proposal.

**V. Finance:** Not much to say – looks like we'll have a surplus. But, likely close to budget. Fred thinks we'll come out ahead.

Finance Committee Report: Notes and thoughts from December meeting as of 12/10/18 69 pledges \$188,059, Went over budget and Jan 13, 2019 to give low down at meeting. We'll identify some areas we may need to cut. Hopefully people will go back and rethink their pledge. Meeting January 8<sup>th</sup> and we will know how December ends. Holding money for phase 1 to pay interest, loan doesn't get converted to a mortgage until August. This can possibly reduce the proposed budget with interest x 8 months.

**VI. Task Force:** Met at the beginning December. The group is reading “The Behavioral Covenant” They are working to become a good role model for the Church. Hope to bring to council to review and take a look at it.

**VII: Annual Meeting:** Ann moves to have meeting Sunday 1/27/19 second by Margie – all in favor.

**VIII. Pastor’s Report (Directly from Pastor without content modification):**

Last month Pastor Deborah tasked us w/ getting out in the church community on Sunday’s to try to reach out to others you don’t know.

We hired Alice Mann and David Reynolds both experts in their fields. We did not accept their input. Deborah does not suggest we hire an expert. We all need to do the work. Beth Hunter came forward to discuss a new Caregiver group – Deborah had 8 people this week volunteer. Beth to announce Sunday.

Worship Update:

Planning and coordination of Worship Services:

November 25 : “Café Church” on was a huge success. I heard a great deal of positive feedback.

November 28 was the “Wonder Wednesday” service. Thanks to Christine Lehoullier for helping with this ministry.

December 2: Communion as we began Advent, followed by an amazingly successful Advent workshop – Kudos to Christine and the Board of Christian Education!!

December 9: I hope all of the members of Council have taken a good look at the new Advent candle holders made out of old wood from the steeple made graciously by Arron Sturgis for First Parish.

Please thank Diane Breeden for working on this with Paul Lindemann.

December 16 : It was lovely to hear the chimes again and we had Kaitlyn Leahy as guest conductor.

December 18: Blue Christmas – in conjunction with St Peter’s Episcopal in Londonderry

Planning the three Christmas Eve services. Christmas Eve – 4:00 – CE doing the bulk of the service with the Pageant; I am providing the framework liturgy and bulletin information.

Evening services: 7:00 and 10:00 pm – coordinating with Debbie Gline Allen.

Pastoral Care Update:

Visiting: I went to the hospital several times since we last met (5 times, 3 different people); had lunch with a couple of parishioners; 1 home visit; 8 phone calls and did the graveside service at the military cemetery in Boscawen for a member’s dad.

New Members: conversations with those wishing to join the church on December 23.

Wendy Williams has been attending this church with her husband and daughter Abigail for a couple of years now. Her husband Jeff joined in October. Libby LeBlanc started coming in October when Dusty and Dottie Patrick joined. She

would now like to join as an Associate member. Shellie Aseltine has been our music provider for many of the

“Wonder Wednesday Services”. She has a Masters of Divinity from Princeton and has been working as worship leader in several churches. She works as a Hospice Chaplain full time. She is now discerning a call to ordained ministry and for that she needs a denomination. After much research, she has decided to seek ordination within the UCC. Her first step is joining a UCC church. We are very blessed to have her among us!

Wedding planning for a couple on December 29<sup>th</sup> in Salem

Cards and keeping in touch notes with various members, especially those who went through a life change this year.

Structure task force suggested that a group of lay leaders help me with pastoral care and in so doing “outsource” this ministry away from the Deacons to lighten their load. Our first meeting will be December 19 to brainstorm a ministry focus and how to execute such a plan. Beth Hunter invited anyone who would like to help to let her know and/or come to the meeting.

Membership: there are so many rumors about people who have “left” the church and gone to other churches. The office has received official resignation of only 2 members. The Deacons and I will need to figure out who exactly wants to change their membership status and who does not by the Annual Meeting.

Education Update:

Tuesday night Adult Faith Formation: We are reading the book of Acts. There are between 10 and 14 people who come regularly. We read from the Bible and share our impressions, our struggles, our questions and our faith journeys with one another. This is a profound ministry experience for everyone who attends.

Administrative update: Meetings/conversations with the following Boards, Committees, Task Forces, and/or visionaries: Stewardship; Deacons; Facilities; PPRC; the “now what” Task force; Nominating; “improve the sound system

in Currier”- Cobban guys; BAC; staff members and probably a few more that happened so fast I didn’t write it down.

I’ve been working to update the membership database, which continues to be difficult in so many ways – but we are getting closer all the time. I have hopes of it being pretty accurate by Annual Meeting.

Writing: besides the services, I write for the Newsletter. This year I wrote a letter to every family who asked me to provide pastoral services. I explained all the things that happen here and that their financial contribution helped us in our mission.

First Parish is truly blessed to have CE Director Christine Lehoullier and Administrative Assistant Michelle Guerrin. They both are so dedicated and hard-working. They create a lovely atmosphere in the building – it’s a joy! And we are also blessed with Interim Debbie Gline Allen. In spite of her other responsibilities in the Mass Conference and her personal loss this fall, she gives 110% to providing a wonderful music experience on Sunday. The congregation is learning new songs and other musicians have been invited to participate. We are blessed to have these three women on staff! I pray that the Council and the members of the congregation make sure that Christine, Michelle, and Debbie know how much they are appreciated.

Thank you for reading this and thank you for all you do!

Merry Christmas and God Bless Us, Every One!

Pastor Deborah

## **IX. Round Table:**

Anne Laduke states she is –one of the 8 caregivers – good things coming!

Dee – new fans and sound system in Currier!

Ryan – nothing to report for Diaconate; Discussion raised concern about members handling the money if they are not attending church. Fred states they are doing their job and they are in good standing with the church. Ryan’s only concern is that there is no term to these positions.

Regarding Pastor Deborah's Challenge to Council– Christine's Uncle Tom has been coming to church periodically has felt quite welcome and the change that he's been looking for.

Joe Weaver – Missions – container in Zimbabwe – finally able to unload but the country is levying fees and fines. Missions to give money to unload – they are unloading as money comes in. There will be a mission moment (Derry Friendship Center) on January 20<sup>th</sup> during service; after will have loaf and ladle. Joe to discuss with Paul to coordinate after worship activity.

Margie – KIT 20 people; Marge read for an hour – new stories. Wonderful! Paul may come to KIT in January to show videos. Stewardship – talk about increasing pledges. Margie praises the children in attendance.

Carol - Personnel: No news

Anne Marie - Christine L. is doing a phenomenal job at bringing in families. Holly Gorgol taking on a more active role. Looking at doing City Reach - \$70pp entrance fee. Looking at possible involvement in the Pinkerton Homeless situation instead.

Christine L. works closely with Anne Marie – kudos to her. Fred adds she is wonderful!

Next Meeting January 16, 2018

Closing Deborah