

First Parish Unitarian Universalist – Canton
Minutes of the Parish Committee
January 8, 2025
7:15 PM on Zoom

In Attendance:

Kitty McGregor, President
Dave Williams, VP-Administration
Larry Cotton, Treasurer
Debbie Radovsky, VP-Member Services
Jonette Nagai, Clerk
Don Seaman, Member-at-Large
Bette Wells, Member-at-Large
Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh, Minister

2024-25 Parish Committee Guests:

Rev. Dr. Clyde Grubbs

Absent:

Call to Order and Chalice Reading: The meeting was called to order at 7:19PM. Bette lit the chalice and gave the following chalice reading:

We Carry Our Faith into Action
by Chrystal Hogan

We ignite this flame, symbol of our faith,
to beckon us into community,
warm our hearts with love,
and give us a light to follow as we carry our faith into action.

Consent Agenda:

After a short discussion and some suggestions, the Parish Committee unanimously voted to approve the draft of Statement of Conscience ad to be published in the Canton Citizen Newspaper.

The Parish Committee (PC) unanimously (with one abstention) voted to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2024 meeting after minor changes suggested by Michelle to the original draft.

Ministers' Thoughts and Concerns:

Michelle noted the critical needs for patience, a sense of humor, and having more fun/joy since there is a lot that will be coming from all directions during the next four years. We need to know our limits and remain focused on our priorities. This includes discontinuing things that are not critical or effective and finding alternatives.

We have two new members, Ashton and Millie. There are a number of people interested in coming back including Brianna King. However, we also need to do more around solidifying membership such as getting newcomers to fill out and turn in the yellow cards.

President's Concerns:

Since we have fewer people, we also need to figure out other ways of doing things but also having more people knowing how to do things so that we are not reliant on a single individual. There are many small things that can and should be done to make things easier, simpler, less annoying, and not reliant on a single person. Fixing the water pressure of the kitchen sink faucet is an example. Taking care of the volunteers is important. Kitty will be focusing on making things easier and smoother.

Kitty is continuing to work on the project of incorporating the church or getting a formal IRS determination letter clarifying the tax status of the church.

Treasurer's Report:

Larry acknowledged David Bryant's work on the actual versus budget income statement report and the balance sheet report. Larry included information on the Dignity Fund as part of the reports for the first time. There were no questions on the reports. Kitty did ask Larry to look into the oil bills to make sure there are no issues. Statements for tax returns will be sent out both via email and snail-mail to members. Reconciliation to the bank statement is still incomplete but will be addressed prior to next month's meeting.

Committee Reports:

Building Projects Ministry – The two principal goals of replacing the Sanctuary roof and patching the driveway have been completed. There are a number of smaller projects either in process or completed including: 1) installing an intercom system at the ramp door; 2) adding another speaker in the sanctuary; 3) installing flood lights to light up the parking lot trigger by motion; 4) replacing all Sanctuary overhead lights with LEDs; 5) an “undecking” the hall party on Saturday January 11th; and 6) installing an alarm and other features to dissuade theft of items from the St. Pauly donation shed. (We may need to consider moving the shed.) Several members of the PC and others (Kitty, Don, Michelle, Dave, Larry) attended a formal security training session recently and we expect to implement some of the suggestions.

Congregational Life and Stewardship Ministry – On the first principal goal of creating a year-long stewardship/fundraising schedule, Dave is focused on preparing for the annual pledge campaign. Don is working on other fund-raising campaigns including an event with Liam Gavin

scheduled for February 15, 2025; details remain to be worked out. The third key aspect of this schedule is legacy fund raising which has not yet started. On the second primary goal of reviewing the membership and friends list, Debbie and Nancy have identified a list of 15 or so individuals/couples to contact to confirm their status. This process should wrap up shortly since the information is necessary for the annual UUA certification process due in February. In addition, we have registered for the Canton Heritage Day and continue working with the CDEI.

Vision Ministry – Progress on the first principal goal of establishing next steps with Braintree and Foxborough congregations is at a stand still so we will need to pivot. This will be a key topic at the next internal Vision meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 16th at 2:30pm in the Chapel. There was no update on the second principal goal of investigating a new website and developing a marketing plan. However, the ads to be put in the Canton Citizen and the various events under the aegis of the NRUUC (Neponset River Unitarian Universalist Community) are effectively part of the marketing/outreach plan. Kitty also encouraged PC members to attend events of the other Five Point Cluster churches.

Executive Session: The PC entered into an Executive Session towards the end of the meeting.

Next Meeting of the Parish Committee:

Parish Committee meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:15pm on Zoom. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 12th.

Closing Words:

Michelle read a reading from the Courage and Call to Action section (#143 adapted from Thomas Merton) from the book “Lifting Out Voices; Readings in the Living Tradition” by the Unitarian Universalist Association:

We are living in the greatest revolution in history –
a spontaneous upheaval of the entire human race:
not a revolution planned and carried out
by any particular party, race, or nation
but a deep elemental boiling over
of all the inner contradictions that have ever been,
a revelation of the chaotic forces inside everybody.
This is not something we have chosen,
Nor is it something we are free to avoid.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18PM.

Open Follow-up Items from previous meetings:

- Get IRS determination letter for tax exempt status or State recognition. (Kitty)
- Send thank you note to driveway vendor. (Kitty?)
- Work on planned giving project. (Kitty, Dave, and Debbie)
- Kitty and Carol Smith to work on rental rate charts and process for one-off rentals
- Dave Bryant, Kitty, and Debbie to work on contract language and policy for long-term rentals.
- Draft up formal policy for handling in-kind donations for approval of PC at next meeting. (Larry)

Minutes prepared, and respectfully submitted, by Jonette Nagai, Parish Committee Clerk