



First Parish in Portland

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

2020-21 Annual Report

Annual Meeting

June 13, 2021

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First Parish Mission & Principles

**The First Parish in Portland, Maine, Unitarian Universalist
strives to manifest its mission to:**

Nurture the spirit,
Grow in community, and
Help heal the world.

We affirm and promote the seven Unitarian Universalist principles:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

THE FIRST PARISH IN PORTLAND, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Annual Meeting Rules of Procedure

- Rule 1 These Rules of Procedure shall not be amended or suspended during the course of the meeting, except by a two-thirds vote.
- Rule 2 The order of the Agenda, as adopted at the beginning of the meeting, shall not be amended during the course of the meeting.
- Rule 3 All matters not covered by these Rules of Procedure or the by-laws of The First Parish in Portland, Maine, Unitarian Universalist, shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- Rule 4 Any motion must be presented in writing via the chat function (via Zoom) whenever possible.
- Rule 5 Each speaker from the floor, whether member or non-member, may speak for up to three minutes per issue.

THE FIRST PARISH IN PORTLAND, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Annual Meeting Agenda

June 13, 2021

- I. **Ingathering** Scott Wheatley, Music Director
- II. **Welcome by President** Jason J. Shedlock, Governing Board President
- III. **Chalice Lighting** The Reverend Christina Sillari, Minister
- IV. **Invocation and Memorial Names** Reverend Sillari
- V. **Call Meeting to Order** Jason J. Shedlock
- VI. **Confirmation of Quorum** Jamie Jarvis, Clerk
- VII. **Adoption of Rules and Agenda** Jason J. Shedlock
- VIII. **Approval of Minutes of June 14, 2020**
- IX. **Reports**
a. Vote to Accept Reports of Officers, Trustees, Committees & Staff
- X. **President's Address** Jason J. Shedlock
- XI. **Leadership Recognition** Dirane Kelekyan, Ministry Leadership Team Chair
Jason J. Shedlock
- XII. **New Business**
a. Discussion & Vote: FY 2022 Budget Claire Cowan, Finance Chair
b. Nomination of New Officers Jason J. Shedlock
i. Governing Board
ii. Board of Trustees
c. Minister's Address Reverend Sillari
- XIII. **Special Recognition of Ministry Teams** Dirane Kelekyan
- XIV. **Words from Our President-Elect** Taryn Friedman
- XV. **Closing and Adjournment** Jason J. Shedlock

THE FIRST PARISH IN PORTLAND, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting via Zoom Sunday, June 14, 2020

- I. **Chalice Lighting** by Governing Board President Jason J. Shedlock
- II. **Invocation and Memorial Names** read by Minister Christina Sillari
- III. **Meeting called to order** at 11:00 AM by Jason J. Shedlock
- IV. An overwhelming quorum was confirmed by Clerk Patty Renaud.
- V. **Motion by Marianne Hill to Adopt the Rules and Agenda.** Seconded by Jan Berlin. Approved with one abstention.
- VI. **Motion by Richard Van Bergen to Approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting** held on June 9, 2019 as presented in the Annual Report. Seconded by Richard Burbank. Approved with one abstention.
- VII. **Motion by Charlie Micoleau to Approve the Minutes of the Membership Meeting** on December 8, 2019 as presented in the Annual Report. Seconded by Austin Farrar. Approved with one abstention.
- VIII. **Motion by Maria Ptacin to Accept the Reports of Officers, Trustees, Committees & Staff** as presented in the Annual Report. Seconded by Jane Shaberg. Approved with one abstention.
- IX. **President's Address Jason J. Shedlock**

Jason expressed deep appreciation for the dedicated members, resilient staff, resourceful volunteers, indefatigable Minister, patient and insightful Board members, and thoughtful Trustees who have done amazing work over the past year.

He challenged us all to DO MORE. Our world is literally on fire and we're at an inflection point. We as Unitarian Universalists in the heart of our city have a moral obligation to stand up and speak out when people are being hurt. It's not too late to say that in 2020 you saw what was happening in the world, called upon your faith as a Unitarian Universalist, and acted against injustice.

Our congregation is strong, and that's good because there's more work to do. Because somebody's been hurting our people. It's gone on far too long and we won't, we can't, we refuse to be silent anymore.

X. **Leadership Recognition**

Dirane Kelekyan, Ministry Leadership Team Chair, Jason Shedlock and Reverend Sillari recognized volunteers for their service. As Dirane noted, *When the best leader's work is done, the people say, 'We did it ourselves.'* – Lao Tzu

Steve Jenks served 13 years on the Trustees, most recently as president. Steve has literally kept our building standing, diversified the trustees in age and gender, and built relationships with the Governing Board.

Sally Oldham has graciously served as interim vice president for the past year. Sally is a thoughtful leader, someone with a caring heart and an intellectual curiosity. Her contributions to the Governing Board have been critical as we adapted to the new governance model.

Vision Goal Leaders:

Janet Robinson, Chair, Coffee Hour Vision Goal

Angus Ferguson, Chair, Communication Vision Goal

Tricia Naddaff and Sheila Cook, Co-Chairs, Year-Round Church Vision Goal

Ministry Team Leaders:

Chris Beasley, Outgoing Chair, Buildings and Grounds

Claire Cowan, Outgoing Chair, Membership

Gary Desrochers, Outgoing Co-Chair, Worship Team

Hannah Herbold, Outgoing Chair, Coffee Hour

Heather Trickett, Outgoing Chalice Group Coordinator

Marianne Hill, Outgoing Chair, Faith in Action

Richard Burbank, Outgoing Chair, Personnel Team

Tim Lippert, Outgoing Chalice Group Facilitator

Stephanie Desrochers, Outgoing Chair, Finance Team

XI. Discussion & Vote: FY 2021 Budget

Stephanie Desrochers, Finance Chair, reported that First Parish finished last year with a balanced budget as required. For this year, facing the COVID-19 pandemic and the closing of the church building, we froze discretionary spending at the end of the year. UUA recommended congregations apply for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan if they didn't have 2-3 months in an emergency/contingency fund. First Parish was approved for a \$47,000 PPP loan, which is 2.5 months of

average payroll expenses. The loan will eventually be forgiven. It allowed us to keep all our staff in their positions at their current salaries, giving them stability and keeping them whole through all of this. The PPP loan, spending freezes, and continued support from members, friends, and monthly rental groups will allow us to finish with a balanced budget this year, and have carryover funds for what is expected to be a challenging financial year ahead.

2021 remains uncertain but we expect a decrease in revenue, with \$203,000 in pledges to date. Most of the PPP money will be used to supplement lost rental income. We anticipate being able to fund many of our in-progress priorities and give staff raises to those who had not received them recently. Unfortunately, we are still not able to fund health insurance for all of our staff, only to the minister. The cost would be prohibitive at \$30,000/year. The Governing Board, Finance, and Personnel Teams are working on this as a priority so that we may be able to truly live our values.

Motion by Maria Ptacin to Adopt the FY2021 Budget as presented.

Seconded by Marianne Hill. Approved with one abstention.

- XII. **Nomination of New Officers.** Jason Shedlock thanked outgoing interim Vice President Sally Oldham and outgoing Clerk Patty Renaud for their service and presented the new slate of Governing Board Members:

Officers: Jason Shedlock, *President*; Taryn Friedman, *Vice President*; Jamie Jarvis, *Clerk*

Members-at-Large: Emily Bolt, Tony Lacertosa, Marcy Makinen, Patty Renaud

Motion by Val Blais to Approve the Slate of Officers and Board Members as presented. Seconded by Susan Farady. Approved with one abstention.

Board of Trustees. Jason Shedlock thanked outgoing President of the Trustees, Steve Jenks, for his years of service and presented the nomination of Austin Farrar for President.

Motion by Steve Jenks to Approve Austin Farrar as President of the First Parish Trustees. Seconded by Jamie Jarvis. Approved with one abstention.

XIII. **Welcome to Leaders in New Roles**

Dirane Kelekyan expressed appreciation for the volunteers assuming new leadership roles:

Austin Farrar - President of the Trustees

Taryn Friedman - Vice President of the Board

Sue Veligor - Chair of Personnel

Carl Capello - Chair of Faith in Action

Claire Cowan - Chair of Finance

Emily Bolt - Chair of Membership

Angus Ferguson - Chalice Group Facilitator

Thomas Mauldin - Chair of Religious Exploration

Two positions remain open - Chalice Group Coordinator and Chair of Buildings and Grounds. Anyone interested please contact Dirane.

XIV. **Minister's Address**

Reverend Sillari noted the intense and powerful year as demonstrated by the incredible work documented in the Annual Report. She shared her appreciation for all church leaders and members for their commitment to this community and for their willingness to share their voices and feedback with her. She encouraged those who don't speak up to let their voice be heard to the ministry team or staff, especially if they need support. Although we are now operating as a year-round church, the UUA has recommended churches stay online until 2021, which will be a difficult process, but many good people are working on it. She challenged the congregation to help sustain our social justice work despite having to work in an online environment.

XV. **Meeting Adjourned at 12:15 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Renaud

Clerk of the Governing Board

Governing Board Report

Officers:

President: Jason J. Shedlock
Vice President: Taryn Friedman
Clerk: Jamie Jarvis
At-Large Members: Emily Bolt
Tony Lacertosa
Marcy Makinen
Patty Renaud

Ex Officio: Reverend Christina Sillari, Minister

Consistency in Change

The 2020-2021 year began with First Parish's first ever Virtual Annual Meeting, due to what every member and friend to our congregation understands was, and continues to be, an unprecedented challenge to our church and community. While we entered year two of Policy Governance at First Parish, it is safe to state that one cannot measure the exact size or the manifestations of the challenges that lie ahead for us in our infancy of a governance change, especially being unable to meet in person to operationalize such changes. Though as we moved ahead with our church year, one thing was sure: our governance structure, as was our Ministerial and lay leadership, is strong and built to last.

By way of background, under our "new" Policy Governance structure, our Minister has full authority and broad latitude to execute the mission and vision of the church, under the rules set out by the [Board Policies](#). They then empower all staff, Committees, and Teams under the Ministry to help them carry out those tasks. Monitoring reports on compliance are provided by the Minister to the Board on a monthly basis to measure against the Board Policies, and discussions are had to note where policies need to change and/or further support is needed. A more fulsome timeline of the events surrounding First Parish's arrival at Policy Governance can be found in the [2018-2019 Annual Report](#).

One can and should read this 2020-2021 Annual Report with pride at the work this congregation as a whole is completing. While the whole point of Policy Governance is that it's a living, breathing, changing structure, the simple takeaway is that at base level and beyond: it's working for us. The exemplary performance of our Minister, staff, and lay leaders would merit special remark in this limited space, even without the severe limitations placed upon them by a global pandemic. The health and vitality of our

church should be a tremendous source of pride for anyone reading this report, and is due to our entire community's ability to adapt with an open heart.

Vision Goals: Planted, Grown

Along with its monitoring function of the Minister, the Governing Board is also responsible for the Vision Goal process. Last year, it was decided that the one year vision goals would, for various reasons, be given another year to germinate and come to fruition. As you will read in the paragraphs to follow, that decision seems to have paid off. Below is an update to those vision goals, and an addition for an upcoming and critically important Vision Goal for the church on the horizon. Thank you to the amazing lay leadership and staff for the dedication and seriousness with which they approached these important issues.

Planning for a 12-Month Church

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the year round church committee members, First Parish has successfully achieved its goal of having services 12 months a year, as is the norm for most other Unitarian Universalist churches in New England. The committee did its work pre-COVID so it was planning for in-person services, however the plans and procedures put in place were also applicable to remote services. Consequently, last summer we were able to meet the congregation's desire for services throughout the year. We will be able to continue these year round services, either remotely or in our Meeting House, in the future.

Improve the Coffee Hour Experience

In-person coffee hour couldn't take place in the 2020-2021 church year. To supplement, weekly virtual small group coffee hours, pastoral care, and frequent topic-lead discussions in breakout rooms after each Sunday service provided many opportunities for connection and engagement among fellow congregants. The assignment to small groups by the virtual host left each week's encounters with others an exciting and anticipated unknown. The structure, relative quietness, and turn taking over Zoom led to increased and more intimate communications. Virtual coffee hour also increased the contact and visibility between more members than might have happened in person. Efforts will continue to calibrate this goal as our church transitions back to in-person services, with an eye to building from the successes of the current virtual format.

Enhanced Communications Activities

Efforts continued this year to transition the Enhanced Communications Vision Goal into a permanent Communication Team. The core team from the prior year paused operations in December so that Reverend Sillari could form a planning team to evaluate

what our communication should look like going forward. Once this process is complete, the Communications Team will have an infrastructure with policies, procedures, and defined roles to guide the team's work. Here is a summary of the team's accomplishments over the last year:

- Interviewed each ministry team to hear what communication First Parish does well, ask for suggestions to improve internal and external communication, and what the Communication Team can do to support individual teams.
- Reviewed existing communication policies and procedures and started to develop new processes where needed. For example, a tool was developed to ensure relevant teams and staff are notified of membership changes. Additionally, we began developing a procedure to ensure the First Parish directory and database remain up-to-date, which included conducting an inventory of everyone involved in a First Parish team, program, or group before the pandemic.
- Increased First Parish communication on social media and community calendars. We also updated the First Parish website, including new pages for Pastoral Care and the Church for EveryBody, with more website changes to come.
- Developed a comprehensive media list for future publicity and press releases.

The 8th Principle: Fostering A New Vision

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” - the [8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism](#)

Systemic racism is prevalent in every corner of our society, and the call to dismantle white supremacy within our own church cannot be ignored. A concerted and named effort must be made to make everyone who walks into our church feel welcome and equal. Adopting the 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism will center our faith in dismantling racism and oppression and aligns with the [Unitarian Universalism Association Widening the Circle of Concern](#) report.

In the coming weeks and months, our church will be leading an effort to finalize this Vision Goal. But we will not merely “check the box.” We can and must adopt the 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism in a meaningful way, with deep impact, holding each member and friend accountable. While work has been, and will continue to be, underway on this critically important multilayered project, a formal launch of this Vision Goal will occur at what we expect will be a special meeting of the Congregation in the Fall of 2021.

Too Brief Notes on Our Minister

It is impossible to use the limited space in an Annual Report to accurately relay the profound impact that Reverend Christina Sillari has had on our church, our community, and our lives during her tenure at First Parish. The Governing Board, both on a personal level and more formally through its role of monitoring the Minister, could not be more proud of the work that our Reverend has done. This work encompassed not only the efforts to support the entirety of the church, but also the fundamental work on our governance structure that allows us to thrive and continue to serve and grow.

Just as First Parish is “a welcoming church in the heart of the city,” Reverend Sillari has been, for over the past decade, the physical embodiment of the heart of our church. It has been nothing short of an honor to have been a partner with her. In the coming weeks, months, and years, more will be said by our congregation about the positive impact she has had on so many of us, our families, and countless others. For now, with full hearts, we simply and humbly say, “Thank you, Christina.”

With Love,

Jason J. Shedlock, President
Governing Board
First Parish in Portland, Unitarian Universalist

Church for EveryBody Project Report

In the Fall of 2016, Louise Berlin and Ted Oldham pulled together a core group of First Parish members to discuss what accessibility at First Parish should look like. As discussion progressed over the next months and Louise's health worsened, the project was divided into two phases:

1. Installing a temporary ramp to quickly provide physical accessibility to the Meeting House and Parish Hall, and securing a designated handicapped parking space in front of the church from the City.
2. Installing an elevator, egress stairs, and an accessible bathroom with a shower to provide comprehensive physical accessibility to the Meeting and Parish House buildings. Rehabilitating the lower level of the Parish House, including the kitchen and Community Room, and addressing Memorial Garden access and security were also included in this plan for phase two.

The first phase of the project was completed in Fall 2017, with the ramp dedication held in November of that year. The second phase began its planning phase in 2018, capital campaign consultants were hired in early 2019, the five-year campaign's quiet phase occurred that summer, and the public campaign began in the fall.

With fundraising on track, First Parish contracted with Ducas Construction for the Phase 2 project and ground was broken in the late summer of 2020. Ducas and their subcontractors worked diligently over the last nine months and have now, with the exception of punch list items, completed their work that included three key Phase 2 components:

- Installation of an elevator
- Construction of a second main entrance on the Portland High School Plaza
- Renovation of the Parish House lower-level community room and kitchen

Additional Phase 2 projects are targeted to be completed in the coming months, pending final fundraising. These include upgrading the Memorial Garden with a wheelchair accessible ramp, better lighting, and improved fencing.

In addition, during 2020, the CFE Leadership Team decided to add a third phase to the Church for EveryBody project: virtual accessibility. This phase is focused on ensuring all First Parish members and friends can participate in church services and events, even if they have hearing or visual challenges or are unable to be at the church physically. As a result, new audio, visual, lighting and hearing assist technology will be installed in the Meeting House in 2021.

The campaign's final financial target is \$1.5M; to date, 96% has been pledged and 77% has already been received by First Parish. This includes a \$50,000 CDBG grant

facilitated by the city of Portland that will contribute to the virtual accessibility project. In addition, we have applied for a FEMA grant that we hope will cover a large part of our security upgrade expenses.

We are grateful for the hard work and contributions of so many members of the First Parish community that have given us the opportunity to live our mission through enabling people of all abilities to, “nurture the spirit, grow in community, and help heal the world.” We hope you are as excited as we are to see this new phase of First Parish’s physical structure and service to the community come to life!

The CFE Leadership Team – Austin Farrar, Charlie Micoeau, Ted Oldham, Christina Sillari, Marge Stockford

Personnel Committee Report

Our committee consists of Lois Winter, Richard Burbank, Stephen Jenks and Sue Veligor. Liaisons include Leslie Runser (Ministry Leadership) and Jamie Jarvis (Governing Board). Personnel had been without a committee for the prior year plus.

We reinvigorated the group and set about editing and improving the Personnel Manual, a document all staff members receive upon hiring and are asked to reread annually. We then had it reviewed by a law firm to ensure compliance with current labor regulation. In December, the group jumped into action as Sheila Sullivan gave her intended leave notice. Kudos to Steve, Lois, and Richard for finding Hannah Gilman, our new Congregational Administrator!

Our goal in the coming year is to revisit and update additional documents related to the staff and other efforts with which we are tasked. We also feel strongly about offering health insurance. Our past inability to offer coverage is completely misaligned with our church values. We also recently learned from UUA benefits advisors that we are out of sync with most congregations who do provide this benefit. We are encouraged that some health insurance benefits have been incorporated in this year's new budget, but we have more work to do to expand coverage and to sustain the program for years to come.

Many thanks to my committee for their generous efforts and support of the work we do. Respectfully submitted by Sue Veligor, Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Chalice Groups Report

This was a year of change. The position of Coordinator transferred from Heather Trickett to Barbara DeSerres in August. At that time, there were eight groups of seven to ten members. A ninth group was added in November. Seventy two members currently participate in this program. Group facilitators meet regularly via Zoom on the first Wednesday of each month. Monthly session guides and Soul Matters Small Group materials are sent to each facilitator one week before the monthly meeting. Facilitators are welcome to write original session guides, if they wish. It is my hope that this program has fostered personal and spiritual growth while also keeping members connected with one another. Respectfully submitted by Barbara DeSerres, Chalice Group Coordinator. If you have questions or would like to offer feedback, contact Barbara DeSerres at: chalice@firstparishportland.org.

Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) Report

The MLT works to support our minister in the leadership of all teams and programs that comprise the ministry of our church. We work as a team with leaders across groups and committees to identify synergies and opportunities that single teams cannot leverage. The group also helps address any conflicts that might arise across teams. The MLT Chair participates in monthly Executive Committee meetings with the Minister and the Presidents of the Governing Board and the Trustees.

In 2020/21 we:

- Continued to support teams as they build out their presence on Google Drive and collaborate virtually during the pandemic.
- Collected team membership information to assist in the maintenance of the church database.
- Held a virtual Fall Retreat for connection, information exchange and an interactive discussion of qualities that make for effective leaders and teams. The results were organized and published in a document entitled: [Reflections from First Parish Leaders: Effective Leaders and Teams](#) and linked into the eNews.

Respectfully submitted by Dirane Kelekyan, Ministry Council Chair. If you have a question or would like to offer feedback, please contact: Dirane Kelekyan at mlt@firstparishportland.org.

Faith In Action (FIA) Committee Reports

The Faith in Action Committee at First Parish is an umbrella structure that ties together the efforts of a number of disparate teams or individuals performing justice work. Carl Cappello became Chair in September 2019. Susan Payne is the Ministry Leadership Team liaison to FIA. I am very pleased to announce that the chair of FIA will be shared from this point forward with Kate Stenberg and Jaimie Brooks. The three of us will sort out our roles as we move forward.

COVID had a major impact on all functions at First Parish this year. Faith in Action teams struggled to continue their ministries, with some being more successful than others. We are overjoyed with the development of the Wabanaki Ally Team and the successful UU the Vote campaign. We lament that the monthly Share-The-Plate collection had to be suspended once the church closed, but will resume the program as soon as possible. Below you will find FIA team reports. Some teams had to suspend their activities and did not submit a report.

Respectfully submitted by Carl Cappello, FIA Chair.

RALLY 4 JUSTICE Report

Formed after the 2016 elections, RALLY 4 JUSTICE (R4J) mobilizes events at First Parish to work for social justice and to oppose hate, racism, sexism, economic inequality, and government by and for the wealthy and big corporations. R4J hosts public forums in our historic Meeting House and via Zoom on issues such as healthcare as a human right, protection of the environment, and criminal justice. R4J opens up our facilities to protestors, as we are located one block from Portland City Hall and Monument Square; both are popular locations for rallies and protests. We provide restrooms, refreshments, water, and meeting space for causes consistent with our U.U. Seven Principles. These causes range from gun safety and tax reform to militarism and the climate crisis. We hold Justice Bean Supper Dances to raise funds for community organizations with missions aligned with U.U. Principles.

For more information and to help revitalize Rally4Justice after COVID-19, contact angus@angusferguson.com.

Public Forums Report

Two Zoom Community Conversations were co-sponsored with the Sierra Club. The first, on July 14th, featured State Senator Shenna Bellows (now Secretary of State) who spoke on moving towards justice and sustainability in the time of COVID. The second,

on December 8th, was with Alison Beyea, Executive Director of the ACLU Maine, who spoke on the implications of the recent election for civil rights in Maine. More forums are planned. Respectfully submitted by Marianne Hill, Chair of Public Forums.

Racial Justice Team Report

The Racial Justice Team, with the Worship Committee's support, planned and organized a Sunday worship service that would announce to the congregation First Parish and its Ministers' central role in the occupation and seizure of Wabanaki land and slaughter of the first people. The pandemic intervened, and on May 8th when the event was to take place, First Parish closed her doors to in-person events. The event was postponed.

On July 8, 2020, the Racial Justice Co-Chairs, Carl Cappello, Macy Makinen, and Kristina Minister, sent a report to Rev. Christina. They reported on the parish's response to Sherri Mitchell's disclosure of First Parish's participation in Wabanaki genocide and colonization in March 2018. This report included a proposal to dedicate a virtual Sunday service to tell the dark truth about church history, to begin a comprehensive response to the atrocities, and a recognition of how decimating the Wabanaki has increased the occupiers' fortunes.

For the Sunday, Oct. 11 service, Rev. Christina offered the first land acknowledgement which continues to head every worship service. Angus Ferguson and Kristina Minister wrote a succinct account of the church's involvement centering on the 18th century long-serving pastor, Rev. Thomas Smith. They spoke of how he organized wealthy church members to finance a party of scouts and cruisers to seize land and collect native scalps for bounty. Richard Burbank composed a song of grief and sang it accompanied by a video he created. A Passamaquoddy poet, Mihku Paul, performed her epic poem of grief for Machigonne, which is now the greater Portland area. Rev. Christina presided over the ceremony called, "Truth, Grief, and Reconciliation." Additionally, for the November 22 Thanksgiving service, celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day was featured.

In the wake of this public announcement of truth and grief, a group of members declared their intent to respond to the genocidal intent of our church and how colonization has benefited us today. The members will do this by supporting legislation to restore sovereignty to the Wabanaki, supporting their food security, and to perpetually educate the public about the church's role in colonization by forming a plan for a permanent exhibition on church grounds. This group of members became the Wabanaki Ally Team, facilitated by Barbara Brown. A significant project of the Racial Justice Team this past year has been the sponsorship of a new component of the larger

Faith in Action Committee. Further, Angus Ferguson, Carl Cappello, and Kristina Minister have enlisted architect Ted Oldham to consult on the exhibit.

Ferguson and Minister's truth statement will be featured in the Maine Historical Society's exhibit, "Begin Again: Reckoning with Intolerance in Maine," opening in late May. The exhibit will be on display, both in person and online, through 2021. An essay featuring Rev. Thomas Smith will also be available online. The Maine Historical Society will display the engraving of Smith, his silver handled and tipped walking stick, and an elaborate Smith family christening dress—all attesting to Smith's pride in possessing finery.

The Racial Justice Team is also in the process of replacing the large Black Lives Matter on the front of the meeting house. This time it will be securely affixed at the base of the bell tower. Our remaining funds will support this important public display of our UU principles. There is much racial justice work that awaits us. The work of the Team, thus far, has been a training ground for addressing compensation for the descendants of African enslaved people.

Respectfully submitted by Carl Cappello, Marcy Makinen, and Kristina Minister.

Wabanaki Ally Team Report

The Wabanaki Ally Team (WAT), formalized in November 2020, provides education and advocacy on behalf of the Wabanaki people both within First Parish and in the greater Portland community.

In the 2020/21 year, WAT has:

- Built relationships with Wabanaki Public Health, including a ceremony on the First Parish steps in January 2021 where Rev. Christina presented WPH representatives with a \$1000 donation.
- Continued to work with Wabanaki REACH, presenting a 3 session workshop in February and March 2021 on "Decolonizing Faith Communities."
- Joined MUUSAN's newly formed Wabanaki Legislation Team. We are also currently partnering with Wabanaki Alliance to advocate in the state legislature for bills introduced in March and April 2021 to restore Wabanaki sovereignty.
- Made initial overtures with the Portland and Westbrook School Departments to incorporate Wabanaki history into the American/Maine history curriculum.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Brown. For more information, please feel free to email Brown.barbaras@yahoo.com.

Youth and Family Outreach Report

History

Youth and Family Outreach (YFO) has a rich and unwavering history of serving some of Portland's most disadvantaged children and families. In addition, YFO has a longstanding, historical connection with First Parish. Founded in 1844 as a community outreach mission of the Unitarian congregations of Portland, from the very start its mission has been to serve "the poor of Portland." Throughout its long history, YFO has provided support to this important part of Portland's population. Beginning in 1853 with the establishment of Maine's first adult education school, the agency has always risen to meet the critical community needs of the time. Throughout the past 176 years, a sample of these community needs included: the Pride Training School for Developmentally Delayed Children, Beacon Teen Center for Homeless Youth, and a Teen Adventure Program for at-risk Middle School youth. For the last 32 years, however, YFO has run an early childhood care and education program for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. In line with its mission, 60-70% of the families that YFO serves are low-income families. YFO is First Parish's oldest social action endeavor. Though YFO has been independent of FP for over 42 years now, the ties between the two are still strong and healthy. Indeed, members of First Parish have served on the YFO Board of Trustees since its inception, and continue to be active volunteers and stewards to this day.

2020-2021 Accomplishments:

- Maintained communication with all families during a 10-week shutdown due to the pandemic. We also held virtual classes and family gatherings, and set up weekly diaper and food deliveries to families in need during the shutdown.
- In September 2020, we restructured in-person programming at YFO. We entered a community partnership with Portland Public Schools to provide school age care to children and families on the days that they were not in school.
- Maintained accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- Maintained the highest rating, Level 4 status, on Maine's Quality Rating System for Child Care Providers.
- Awarded a collaborative CDBG grant (with Catherine Morrill Day Nursery) from the City of Portland. This grant allowed us to assist families whose children would otherwise not be able to stay in school because of unexpected and temporary difficult times.
- Completed our 8th year of providing a community-based Public Pre-K classroom in Portland.

- Continued our focus on nutrition by providing highly nutritious lunches and snacks, using mostly locally grown food sources prepared by YFO's own, in-house Chef.
- Continued collaboration with Portland's General Assistance Workforce Volunteers Program.
- Completed our 14th year of collaboration with the USM School of Social Work Internship Program. YFO is an official Internship Site for BSW students. These students provide invaluable support and case management services for our families.
- Continued our commitment to community collaboration through our work with the Maine Shared Services Alliance and the Maine Department of Labor. Through this collaboration, an Early Childhood Specialist Apprenticeship Program was developed. When slots are available both through the Program and at YFO, apprentices are placed at YFO.
- YFO Executive Director continued to serve on a Task Force developed to identify barriers that families experience when trying to access Public Pre-K in Portland.
- With the support from our state, community, and PPP loans, we completed FY20 with a strong fiscal foundation going into FY21.

Building a Brighter Future: A YFO Campaign

YFO has served the community since 1844 and plans to continue to provide the services most needed by our neighbors in perpetuity. It partners with community organizations, citizens, and businesses working to create economic opportunities for families to lift them up out of poverty. To this end, in July 2018, YFO embarked on an endeavor to expand programming that would assist its children and families. In March, 2019, YFO closed on the purchase of 337 Cumberland Avenue, the property that abuts YFO. The intent is to use this land to build a site that would allow YFO to increase classroom space, particularly in the age groups where we are consistently turning children away.

YFO is small, but mighty. Nonetheless, it does not have the resources to go it alone, especially given the difficult financial times in which we are now living. So, after much research and community discussion, YFO decided to partner with an affordable housing developer, Portland Housing Authority, to expand our mission for this building. Collaborating with PHA will allow YFO to double the number of children we serve. In addition, this collaboration will allow us to increase the availability of affordable homes for some of our most vulnerable families. By increasing the availability of both affordable homes and childcare/educational opportunities within Portland, YFO and PHA strive to provide even more opportunity for residents of Portland to engage and prosper. In January 2020, YFO met its first fundraising benchmark, 30% raised toward the capital campaign goal. In June 2020, initial floor plans and exterior renderings were completed for the YFO expansion.

YFO Board of Trustees

The First Parish Bylaws call for the official election and/or endorsement of YFO Board members by the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Society. This endorsement will happen at the FP Annual Meeting.

Amy Grommes Pulaski, President, Term expires February 2022

Melissa Cilley, Vice President, Term expires October 2023

Lindsey Chard, Secretary, FP Member, Term expires January 2022

Owen Patrick, Treasurer, Term expires June 2021

Georgia Jenkins, Term expires September, 2022

Emily Leibling, Term expires September 2023

Tom Marczak, Term expires February 2024

Brenda Norris, FP Member, Term expires August 2023

YFO Administrative Personnel

Camelia Babson-Haley, Executive Director

Michelle Greenlaw, Program Director

Respectfully submitted by Jackie Oliveri. For more information, please email joliveri@gwi.net.

Religious Exploration Committee (RE) Report

As we know is true for everyone, our committee has done our best to navigate during the pandemic, by meeting monthly on Zoom and supporting Toben Cooney-Callnan in his role of Director of Religious Exploration. Toben has continued to share his time and gifts with First Parish and the UU congregation in Brunswick. We have adapted the Time for All Ages storytelling to become an online event, and we have admired Toben's ability to adapt with us.

Toben has been busy with multiple children's programs, including: Zoom RE sessions for the children; Children's Chapels; Coming of Age instruction and Sunday service with the middle school children; Youth Group; Youth Sunday; and RE Sunday. Our committee has been busy supporting these programs.

Following Toben's lead and vision, we have continued our work to transition the RE Program and RE Committee towards a Faith Formation model, which is a whole congregational approach. To that end, we have drafted a new Faith Formation Mission and Vision Statement and have updated Toben's job description to include the FF duties. As you may remember, Faith Formation is a broader concept that reorients our perspective to the whole congregation, working to develop and foster our UU faith. Toben taught an adult Faith Formation class for five weeks this Spring, and is doing an adult Credo Service, whereby some participants will share their beliefs.

For 2021/22, we hope the RE Committee will officially become the Faith Formation Committee. In order to do this, we will need new members with fresh perspectives to develop this vision, especially from people who may not have children or those who have an interest in adult Faith Formation.

Respectfully submitted by Thomas Mauldin, Chair of the RE Committee.

DRE: Toben Cooney-Callnan

Members: Thomas Mauldin, chairperson; Andrew Bloom; Mary Bloch; Maura Sullivan; Richard Hooks Wayman.

Library Committee Report

The Library Committee has remained active despite the Pandemic and the church building being closed. The library remained open through use of our online book catalogue, with curbside pickup through our previous Administrator Sheila's wonderful help. When the books were packed up and the bookcases moved due to renovations to the Parish Hall, curbside pick up stopped.

Monthly Book Club meetings via Zoom have been held by the Library Committee starting 1/7/21. Laurie Hasty, Membership Coordinator, suggested this activity and we happily agreed. The monthly online Book Club Meetings have given interested people in our congregation an opportunity to discuss and share books that they are reading. With Michael Pancock's help, Zoom meetings for the Book Club have been scheduled monthly on an ongoing basis. Our Book Club has a current membership of 10 people. We plan to continue meeting through the summer and throughout the next fiscal year.

Breathe: A Letter to my Sons by Imani Perry has been named the UUA Common Read Book for 2020-2021. We purchased six copies of this book for our library, and they have been made available to church members by curbside pickup with the help of Hannah Gilman, our current Administrator. An online group discussion of *Breathe* was held on May 23rd.

Gabriele Ricaux is our new volunteer member of the Library Committee. She plans to help us set up our library in the Parish Hall, once the church has reopened and our bookcases have been moved in. We look forward to being in our new accessible space. Michael Pancook remains on the Committee as a liason, and has been very helpful in keeping library services functioning during the past year. I plan to continue as the Chair of the Library Committee during this next year of transition, and then to hand this role over to a new Chair in 2022/2023. Our budget for this fiscal year was \$150, of which we spent \$69.72 on the purchase of the copies of *Breathe* for use by our congregation.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Garnett, Library Committee Chairperson.

Pastoral Care Team Report

The Pastoral Care Team responds to calls that come into the First Parish office that are of a pastoral care nature, makes phone calls to members in need and sends cards. We also visit members in hospitals, extended care facilities, and their homes, often bringing food and flowers. We keep in touch with homebound members by regular visits, holiday cards, and sending sermons and bulletins from Sunday services. We support members in the end of life process and help facilitate celebrations of life and memorial services. When possible we also give rides to Sunday services. We often partner with other FP committees to more fully support our parishioners.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we have been contacting parishioners in need by phone. We look forward to the day when we can again meet in person. In addition, during this current fiscal year we have:

- Added a Pastoral Care Breakout Room during Sunday Zoom services
- Updated our PCT mission on the FP website
- Sent Spring “Thinking of You” cards to the entire FP membership
- Attended a Zoom PCT training on “The Art and Science of Dying”

Respectively submitted by Judy Micoleau, Chair of the Pastoral Care Team.

Members: Anne Heminway, Cathy Koger, Maryellen McCone, Jeanne Mullen, Rev. Christina Sillari, Wendy Stanley

Memorial Garden Committee Report

The Memorial Garden Committee works with the Trustees to maintain the Memorial Garden. Mikki Jones-Little is contracted to perform ongoing landscape maintenance. First Parish Trustees cover the costs of Mikki’s work, maintaining the sprinkler system, and other associated work. The garden was closed this year due to the pandemic and a ban on congregant settings. However, routine maintenance was done by the Committee last Fall and this Spring. New plantings include a red twig dogwood in honor of outgoing Trustee President, Steve Jenks. Additional improvements are being phased into the gardens as a part of the Church for EveryBody project. Always Green, owned by Breece Sleeper, performed some much needed plant removal and hard pruning. The entrance will be ramped this summer for accessibility. Stay tuned for other improvements in the coming years. The Committee welcomes any ideas concerning the garden, and for others to join in assisting in the ongoing preservation of our garden.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Shary, Chair of the Memorial Garden Committee.

Music Committee Report

COVID was the predominant theme for the Music Committee this year. Yet, despite the isolation imposed by the pandemic, music at First Parish did not stop. The choir, folk group, and quartet dove into the digital recording business with enthusiasm. After a few bumps and scrapes, our First Parish music makers began making weekly recordings to ensure every service was filled with meaningful music that enhanced the message from the pulpit. Members not only learned how to record their part, but embraced the job of mixing the final take into a polished and presentable piece.

Alas, some of our members were technically challenged by digital technology and took a hiatus from choir participation. But once the meeting house opens and the CDC allows large in-person gatherings, we suspect participation will once again flourish. The music committee recruited two new members in January – Susan Cook and Cliff Hoover – both members of the choir and enthusiastic to support the music program.

Respectfully submitted by Deena Hastings, Chair of the Music Committee.

Pageant Committee Report

It was with a heavy heart that the committee decided not to present our historic Nativity Pageant service for the 94th year due to the pandemic. This was not a simple decision to make last fall as we all were figuring out how to manage this crisis; however, we knew that it was of the utmost importance to protect the health and safety of all of the participants and our congregation. In recognition of the special tradition that the Pageant is for many people, Rev. Christina, Scott Wheatley, and I incorporated music, words, and photographs from the Pageant in the online Sunday morning worship service about Jesus on December 20.

Respectfully submitted by Laurie Hasty, Pageant Committee Chair. For more information, please email laurie@maine.rr.com.

Buildings & Grounds Committee Report

Because of the massive construction project (Church for EveryBody) taking place at First Parish in 2020 and 2021, and the fact that our facilities have been closed to the public, the activities of the B&G Committee have been changed and limited for some time. Everyday cleaning and set ups for meetings have been altered or eliminated altogether. Power outages caused by construction activities have unintentionally interfered with basic maintenance and administration. Adjustments have been made to accommodate construction demands as we progress toward completion of the Accessibility Project.

Repairs to the slates on the Meeting House roof have stopped a recurring leak and made it possible to have loose plaster stabilized, primed, and painted.

We have experienced the surprising events of two of our six decorative copper finials falling from the steeple in the last few months. Finding contractors to repair or replace these finials has been unsuccessful to date.

Once the CFE Project is completed, a great deal of work will be needed to put the church back in order. Buildings and Grounds will be involved in the resettling of furniture and various objects with new locations and spaces. We will need volunteers to help with resettlement.

Continued maintenance of our beautiful gardens and grounds is ongoing in conjunction with the Garden Committee. Moe has been able to get some much-needed painting completed in the balcony level of the Meeting House during the renovations.

In conclusion, I want to thank Moe Blanchard and Ted Oldham for all the work they have done for Buildings and Grounds this year. Respectfully submitted by Chris Beasley, Chair of Buildings and Grounds.

Communications Team Report

Please see the [Vision Goal Report](#) for an update on all that the Communications Team has accomplished over the last year. Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Desrochers, Chair of the Communications Team.

Finance and Stewardship Report

For the third year in a row, First Parish finished the July 2019 - June 2020 church fiscal year with a balanced budget. In fact, we finished with a surplus of \$2718. Per governing policy, half of this surplus was set aside in the Contingency Fund to help us navigate future financial challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic was transformational for First Parish in many ways, including financial. Many members and friends increased their donations to help us weather the loss of revenue from event rentals and fundraisers like the Spring Fling Dinners and the raffle. A number of our long-term rental groups continued to pay rent even though the space was closed to protect public health. We are so grateful for this incredible community support. We were also awarded two loans from the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), totaling \$92,905. The first loan was forgiven in January and we expect the second loan to be forgiven this summer. These funds allowed us to retain all of our dedicated and talented staff and be in a much stronger position as we enter the new fiscal year on July 1.

As of the April 30 financial report, First Parish has reached 84% of its revenue goal (\$389,874) because of continued contributions from members, friends, dedicated rental groups, and the forgiven PPP loan. First Parish has spent 76% of its budget and is forecasting a break-even year by June 30.

The [proposed 2021-2022 budget](#) makes an important demonstration of our values by offering health insurance to our full-time employees for the first time. We are able to make this commitment, in part, because the PPP loans covered a significant portion of our operating expenses this year. Providing this important protection for our dedicated staff over the long term—and with the goal of expanding coverage to part time employees in future—will require new sources of fundraising and rental revenue in future years. **We are asking all members of the First Parish community to carefully consider how they can support this important commitment through volunteerism and financial contributions.**

The minister search will involve significant expenses, many of which will be incurred after July 1, 2022. The 2021-22 budget includes allocating a budget surplus of \$19,000 to the Contingency Fund so that we are well positioned to cover these future costs.

Pledges to the Stewardship drive are a critical piece of the annual budget. The Stewardship team was challenged to connect with people this year and reached out by mail, phone, and email. We are grateful for the generous support of members and friends of First Parish who made a financial commitment. We have received pledges totaling \$199,016 from 160 households as of early June. We acknowledge that this year

has affected people in many different ways. Pledges from households that had previously pledged grew by \$10,988 over the prior year total. We also received pledges from 11 new households this year.

New this year is the option to make a continuous pledge that does not expire at the end of the fiscal year. This provides a base pledge amount for planning and allows pledgers to know that their support will not be interrupted. The theme for this year's Stewardship drive was Be a Sustainer. We thank all of you for helping sustain the church programs and mission with your support in so many ways.

This year's Finance Team Members are: Bill Adams, Fundraising Chair; Carl Cappello, Income and Expense Treasurer; Matt Caston, Clerk; Susan Cook, Stewardship Chair; and Claire Cowan, Chair. Stewardship Team Members are: Bill Adams, Jennifer Bell, Emily Bolt, Martha Burke, Susan Cook, Emily Dupraz, Arne Gronningsater, Marlies Reppenhagen, and Debbie Schulz.

Respectfully submitted by Claire Cowan and Susan Cook. If you have a finance or budget question or would like to offer feedback, please contact Claire Cowan at finance@firstparishportland.org.

Membership Team Report

The Membership Committee is dedicated to fostering community at First Parish, supporting membership retention, and creating a welcoming environment to attract new members. All aspects of church were quite different this year, and Membership was no exception. We restructured the annual Opportunity Fair to become monthly breakout sessions after service during coffee hour. These sessions served to both educate parishioners about the countless options for getting involved in First Parish groups, as well as to introduce team leaders and functions. We also continued our mentorship program for new members. Last summer, an attempt to begin having online interest group meetings was made via a poll in the eNews; a set of instructions for creating an online activity was created. The only product of this was the monthly Book Group led by Betsy Garnett, chair of the Library Team. Next year, we are looking forward to planning more membership activities in person, as the CDC guidelines allow us to do so.

Respectfully submitted by Emily Bolt, Chair of the Membership Team. If you have a question or would like to offer feedback, please contact Emily Bolt at emswah@gmail.com.

Worship Committee Report

After bringing our church fully online in March 2020, this marked the first church year spent entirely remote. Our team managed the logistics of Facebook Live and Zoom, provided technical support to numerous members, and oversaw the hire of a new staff member, tech director Devon Madeiros. We did all this with a small Worship committee and membership changes, while also not being able to be together in-person. We didn't just make the best of virtual church, we made the most of it. Being online allowed us to bring in remote guest preachers. It also gave us opportunities for members and youth to present in services, when they otherwise would not have been able to, by pre recording them. We have been lucky to have so many members of the church willing to jump in and offer their stories. This made the transition into year-round services much more manageable, as did the assistance of ministry student Caro Barschow. As everything changed, it turned out to be an opportune time for First Parish to change as well. This year, we were able to make our services available to members all Summer long for the first time.

While nothing that happened this year would have been our first choice, the Worship Committee managed it with grace, creativity, compassion, and dedication. We look forward to a new year of assisting the interim minister in crafting the quality services which make First Parish our spiritual home.

With gratitude,

Jenna Nunziato, Worship Committee Chair

Board of Trustees Report

Who We Are

In 1906, the members of the First Parish Society approved a Declaration of Trust and designated a permanent Board of Trustees with authority to receive and hold the original funds of \$1,866.27 plus, “any and all other property,” for the benefit of First Parish. Today, the Trustees hold title to our trust funds and all church property, including our Meeting House and Parish House, with their contents, and our beautiful gardens. Our trust funds total about \$3 million, of which 4-4.5% is available for Trustee use each fiscal year to support church operations and fund property repairs, renovations, and maintenance.

Fiscal Year 2021 Priorities

Church operations and the Church for EveryBody accessibility project (CFE) have been the beneficiaries of a good portion of the Trustees’ spending in FY21. This will continue in FY22 as overlapping Trustee and CFE priorities are addressed. The cost of these items will total about \$60,000. The Trustees have also committed to lend the CFE campaign a bridge loan of up to \$500,000 to help finance the costs of the project. The Trust has, to date, lent the campaign 60% (\$300,000) of the total loan amount.

Current Trustees (end of term)

Austin Farrar ('27), President
Janet Puistonen ('26), Secretary
Stephanie Eglinton ('25), Treasurer
Randall Weill ('24), Security
Charles Micoeau ('23), Legal
Linda Shary ('22), Memorial Garden
Ted Oldham ('21), Facilities

Respectfully submitted by Austin Farrar, President of the Board of Trustees. If you have a question or would like to offer feedback, please contact Austin at ahfarrar47@gmail.com.

Board of Trustees Financial Reports

The Board of Trustees [financial reports](#) are respectfully submitted by Stephanie Eglinton, Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. If you have a question or would like to offer feedback, please contact Stephanie at seglinto@maine.rr.com.

Safe Congregation Committee Report

The Safe Congregation Committee remained very active this year, meeting monthly to attend to the safety of our members, friends, visitors, and renters as outlined by the Safe Congregation Charter. It was immediately apparent that the information about the Pandemic warranted more attention, so a sub-committee was formed called the Covid-19 Task Force. Several projects have been on-going or newly identified to ensure a safe workplace, meeting space, and worship environment.

Completed Projects:

- Covid 19 Guidelines for a Phase Reopening Plan was approved on 5/14/2021
- Sharps containers have been purchased/installed in the public bathrooms
- Appropriate Covid 19 signage is available and posted on site
- AED is on-site

Ongoing Projects:

- Updates and revisions to the Covid 19 Guidelines will be needed
- As we approach reopening, research and contract with a security agency for Sunday coverage*
- Fire Drill/Evacuation plans need to be updated and performed for 2021
- Pro-CPR training to be completed by staff and interested committee members (6-10 attendees)*
- Continue research for Active Shooter Training*
- Purchase/obtain and install a sharps container in the Memorial Garden*

(An asterisk indicates that the item is budgeted but delayed until reopening)

Safe Congregation Committee Members: Moe Blanchard (staff), Toben Cooney-Callnan (staff), Susan Payne (MLT).

Covid 19 Task Force Members: Kip DeSerres, Christine Hey, Jen Stenberg (co-chair) and Liz Wasilewski (co-chair)

Respectfully submitted by Liz Wasilewski.

Staff Reports

Membership Coordinator's Report

A full year of conducting First Parish activities solely online has been an interesting challenge! It has provided some unique opportunities that resulted in greater connections within our church.

The virtual coffee hour breakout rooms after each Sunday worship service randomly introduced congregants to one another. Deep conversations and new friendships developed that might not have happened during a more traditional in-person coffee hour. Breaking the Opportunity Fair into smaller monthly presentations instead of a large, open house format allowed parishioners to learn about the important work of each First Parish team and meet the leaders.

Several online classes were offered, engaging new and longtime parishioners together and fostering a deep exploration of our faith. The *UU History* classes and *Path to Membership* sessions are offered annually as a prerequisite to membership, but are also informative for anyone involved in our faith and our church. Rev. Christina led discussions about the Gnostic Gospels and Toben Cooney-Callnan, DRE, led a Faith Formation workshop series. From each of these, new Friends developed a connection to First Parish and some later became Members.

Effective use of the internet is an important outreach tool underutilized by our church. I joined the Communications Team to strengthen First Parish's use of social media, particularly Facebook and Instagram. Coordinated guidelines have been developed for teams to announce their activities via these platforms. Each week, I create and post a Wayside Pulpit Reflection and a worship service announcement. The other major project for this team has been to revise our ICON database. We developed a process which will enhance the accurate management of our membership information.

The highlight of the church year for Membership is the addition of 14 new members to First Parish! Creative thinking and technical expertise collaborated to create meaningful Membership Ceremonies. On September 20, 2020 and May 9, 2021, slideshows of new members signing our historic membership book in the Memorial Garden, following strict COVID safety precautions, were woven into the Zoom worship services. The congregation witnessed this significant moment and then actively convened with our new members. Some of our new members have only ever engaged with First Parish online, yet are already actively involved in activities. I look forward to welcoming them all into our buildings, worship, and activities in person!

In many aspects, the work of the Congregational Administrator and the Membership Coordinator are closely connected and overlap. It has been a pleasure to work with Sheila Sullivan, our former Administrator, and Hannah Gilman, our new Administrator. I also appreciate the support and collaboration of the Membership Team and the leadership of Emily Bolt.

Very truly,

Laurie Hasty, Membership Coordinator. For more information, please email membership@firstparishportland.org.

Music Director's Report

We have been out of our beloved Meeting House for 14 months!! The pandemic has definitely taken a toll on the music program at First Parish. The influx of new choir members came to a halt; however, those who remained engaged were amazing and kept music alive during our services. The folk group, 425 Congress, and the women's quartet, Una Voce, have been instrumental in creating new content (through audio and video technology) for online streaming services. The Nativity Pageant and the Concerts for a Cause series were canceled during this season. But, we were able to create a couple of special services, Soltice and Gay Pride, for online streaming. The Pride service was especially successful, with over 2.6K online views so far!

One good thing that has come out of the pandemic is our new found technology skills. Out of necessity and the desire to keep the congregation and choir engaged, I had to learn computer software to create both audio and video content. When we do get back to in-person worship, everything will be different in order to maintain our online presence. The skills we have all been forced to acquire for survival during the Covid crisis will be the very same skills that lead us into the new era of Church for Everybody.

I'm hoping that the new church year will bring a return to some of our old traditions, and create some new ones as well. As always, I am grateful to the leadership and congregation of First Parish for not throwing in the towel, and for nurturing our members and the greater community. It is an honor to serve this community.

Respectfully submitted by Scott Wheatley, Music Director.

Director of Religious Exploration's Report

Shared Ministry proved to be a saving grace for the RE Program during the pandemic. We began the year by sharing the Coming of Age Program with UUCB. This was a well attended, successfully shared program. The Coming of Age Service marked our first shared Worship Service with UUCB. In December 2020, we combined both our Sunday morning RE classes and our Sunday evening Youth Group meetings with UUCB. At that time, one of our paid RE teachers stopped attending our RE meetings. By combining our meetings with UUCB, we were still able to follow our Safe Congregation policy of having two adults present with the children at all times, since the two teachers from UUCB were in attendance at the RE Zoom meetings.

The shared Youth Group allowed for the youth from both congregations to spend time with Rev. Justine from UUCB and Rev. Christina. The youth were also invited to participate in a Racial Justice Book Discussion put on by the Working for Justice Committee at UUCB. Most recently, UUCB and First Parish combined talents, effort, and brilliant youth to create a highly attended and well received Youth Sunday Zoom service. The service was made available to both congregations, and was streamed to the First Parish Facebook Page and the UUCB Youtube channel. There were four youth from UUCB and eight youth from First Parish who were part of the service.

We are currently in the process of organizing another shared Worship Service for Religious Exploration Sunday. This service will feature children from both congregations. In addition to our weekly Zoom RE meetings and monthly Zoom Children's Chapels, I also shared *Time for All Ages* stories for most of the Sunday Worship services. Over the last year, I sent out quarterly RE packets to families. These packets included worksheets, stories, and fun activities to connect the kids with their UU identities. I also developed a Pen Pal Program between kids from First Parish and UUCB. Thirteen kids from both congregations participated, and I received feedback from families that they really enjoyed this opportunity to connect with other local UU kids.

At the end of last church year the RE Committee, with the support of Christina and the Board, made the decision to begin to shift away from the Religious Exploration classroom model to the Faith Formation model. This shift will allow us to offer a more expansive definition of educational spiritual programming. We are currently working to rebrand from Religious Exploration to Faith Formation. We have worked on a job description for the Director of Faith Formation, and have created a mission statement for the Faith Formation Committee. In its current state, the RE Committee does not have enough members with time and energy to commit to supporting the work of shifting from RE to Faith Formation. In order for the shift to occur, we are in need of a new chairperson and co-chair who can help us organize our efforts to move adult, youth,

and child programming under the same Faith Formation umbrella. We are seeking to attract and include members who are not parents and those who have interest in adult and all age programming. I developed and led an Adult Faith Formation Program in March called *Following Your Path*. That workshop series was well supported by the MLT and other leaders from First Parish. On May 30th there will be a *Following Your Path* service led by members of the workshop. I will be offering a reflection about Faith Formation during this service.

Respectfully submitted by Toben Cooney-Callnan, Director of Religious Exploration.

Sexton's Report

Hello everybody! I hope everyone is doing well and feeling safe. I joined the staff here at First Parish in 2002. It has been 19 years - I can hardly believe it! I love our community. I enjoy working with the staff, church members, committees, church leaders, rental groups, and anyone who drops in to say hello. It's important to me that everyone who enters our building feels welcome and safe.

I have been working on many building projects over the last year. Most of my focus has been working with various contractors for the Church For EveryBody project. I have also been working closely with Ted Oldham and Chris Beasley, and I appreciate all their hard work over the last year. I can't wait for everyone to see the final product! Some other projects I have completed are:

- Painted the black fence in front of the building
- Meeting with the staff every Wednesday via Zoom
- Serving on the Safe Congregation Committee and meeting with them monthly via Zoom
- Snow removal
- Lawn mowing and tree pruning
- Detailed cleaning during the CFE construction

I hope to see everyone soon. I miss you all!

Congregational Administrator's Report

As most of you are probably aware, I am new to this position as of March 1st, 2021. I am grateful to the staff, Reverend Christina, the Governing Board, the Trustees, the team leaders, and the parishioners for welcoming me into your community, and for receiving my ideas and insight with an open mind. I am also thankful for Marge Stockford, as she stepped in to train me at the start of my position. I look forward to assisting the staff in guiding our congregation through the transition of having an Interim Minister and, eventually, a new called Minister.

As the Congregational Administrator, my primary function is to keep the inner workings of the church running smoothly. This includes many responsibilities like bookkeeping, internal and external communication, managing rentals, directly supervising the Sexton and Membership Coordinator, managing technological issues, and balancing the church and minister's calendars. There are many small details in this position that are critical to keeping the church operating cohesively.

I currently serve as a member of the Communications Team, a relatively new team that focuses on strengthening the internal and external communication of our church. We have been working collaboratively to manage social media posts, preparing to transition to Google Suite, media publications, ICON cleanup, and website updates. The Communications Team could use 2-3 more members to assist in the workload. If you or someone you know may be interested in this, please feel free to reach out to me!

I have been working closely with the Safe Congregation Committee's Covid Task Force to begin reopening the church to our ongoing renters. We have three groups of renters (two AA groups and Peaceful Harbor Sangha) who have been paying their monthly rent through the last 13 months, even as the church has been closed. I have been advocating for these groups to allow them to re-enter the building, abiding by the Covid Task Force's safety guidelines. We are currently in phase three of our reopening plan, so the AA groups can now meet in the Memorial Garden while adhering to the specified guidelines. This is great news for AA members, and for the church's financial needs!

I have also been working with many potential wedding clients and have begun booking weddings for late 2021 and 2022. This work includes coordinating meetings to show the Meeting House, preparing and handling contracts, and tracking deposits. As some of you may know, weddings are crucial one-time rentals that contribute a significant amount to our yearly budget. We currently have 4 weddings scheduled for 2021.

Bookkeeping tasks are some of the small, critical details that I handle on a weekly basis. These tasks include processing staff payroll, depositing checks, inputting data into ICON

to track financial contributions, processing bill payments, writing checks, and tracking credit card expenses. I am extremely grateful to Claire Cowan, our Finance Chair, for her assistance, training, and patience with me in accomplishing these tasks. She has helped me tremendously with bookkeeping tasks and is always available to answer questions. I also want to thank Carl Cappello for being flexible, willing to answer questions, and for helping me analyze our budget reports. One of my goals for the year has been to become quicker and more efficient at paying the bills. Reverend Christina, Claire, Carl, and I agreed that I should move to paying bills weekly for the month of May, instead of biweekly, to increase my efficiency with it.

I have also been working on several side projects for various committees and congregants. These include formatting and editing the Personnel Manual, updating First Parish's history on our website and Wikipedia, preparing to transition to Google Suite, adding pages on our website for the Pastoral Care Team and the Church For EveryBody campaign, updating our media contact list, and managing the church's Zoom accounts. I also participated in the Wabanaki REACH Workshop sponsored by the Wabanaki Ally Team and hope to attend more workshops and classes in the future.

This job has been an adventure and a challenging transition for me. I am grateful to all of you who have assisted me along the way, offered me advice, and answered my questions. I am truly honored to be a part of such an incredible community of wonderful individuals. Thank you for the opportunity!

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gilman, Congregational Administrator. If you have a question or would like to give feedback, please contact me at office@firstparishportland.org.

Minister's Report

I think my mother had a secret desire for me to be famous. Getting all A's in school and being physically beautiful was not enough. She worked hard to get me on television. I appeared on Romper Room, Bozo, and was a finalist for a show called Zoom. I performed as a dancer and actor well into my thirties, but never on screen. I never wanted to be on screen. It terrified me. Yet, this past church year I was on a screen most Sunday mornings, sharing my thoughts, feelings and ideas with you. I never performed on the TV show Zoom, but Zooming has allowed me to continue to minister to you and lead our congregation through these challenging times. It has been wildly weird, but because of your presence and your grace I am no longer terrified. Thank you!

After eleven years of being your minister, I am leaving my position at First Parish. Our shared ministry has been an amazing journey. So much growth and depth has occurred over the past decade; yet, I feel I have taken First Parish as far as I can. First Parish is in a healthy place equipped with the staff and leaders you need to courageously and confidently move forward. I am excited for you, and I have faith in you. You are vibrant and open, creative and wise.

The saddest part of leaving is not letting go of my job or the mantle of ministry. I will not miss the huge responsibility of ministry, or the impossible role I have played. I will miss you, the people whom I have grown to know and love and admire. Unfortunately, my relationship with you must be completely severed in order for you to fully release me as your minister and make space for the new minister. I know it is a challenging situation for some of you. But, I know you will get through it. Another sad part of my leaving is that I am leaving when COVID is still a health issue, so we may not be able to gather in person as a community for a celebration.

If you are reading this, it means you care about First Parish. May your care and commitment to this community continue. May you support this congregation with your time, treasure, and talent. May you practice kindness, compassion, self-care, spiritual seeking, and justice making. May you do your part in sustaining the welcoming community we have created together. May you reflect upon the ways in which First Parish holds on to white supremacy and colonization, and move towards dismantling the systems that keep our black, brown, and indigenous siblings from feeling welcome in our spaces and programs. May you invite your family, friends, and neighbors to church, and stop keeping our liberating and saving faith a secret. May you have patience with one another and listen more than you speak. May you keep evolving and transforming as individuals, and as a community, and keep our legacy alive.

I love you! I bow to you! I bless you!

Reverend Christina Sillari, minister@firstparishportland.org.