

Parish Board Meeting FRS – June 19, 2024

Present: Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Tina Benik, Kathy Desilets, Renée Wolf Foster, Laurie Evans-Daly, Tom Himmel, Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Bob Higgins, Annie Maurer, Annie Madden, Doug Latham, Bill Clary from Green Team.

Absent: Caitlin Creps, Liss Larsen

Call to Order: Jim Supple called the meeting to order at 6:37pm.

Welcome/Reading/Chalice Lighting: Rev. Rebecca

Rev. Rebecca thanked the Board for a great and eventful year. She reminded us that there are many things beyond our control and wished for our tolerance for that in the coming year. Best wishes to Vern as he recovers, and to Liss as her dad is in home hospice. To all, fond wishes that we find peace and know we are loved.

Minister's Update: Rev. Rebecca

Reading: Rev. Rebecca shared a story of a conversation. In summer at a stormy beach a child asked their dad, "How far could you swim in a storm like this?" Answer: As far as was needed.

Minister's Report:

- Rev. Rebecca has added a column to her report for "Board Actions/Minister's Actions." The hope is that this will lead to more organic conversation about Board roles. We need to look at the intersection between Board and Minister.
- Special Congregational Meeting: We need approval to sign the contract for repair of steeple lights.
- Communications Staffing: We would like to contract with someone rather than adding an employee. Among the things we want to do is to create a new layout for the Steeple newsletter connecting it to the website. For example, a standard format would be used for listing events. An example to look at is the North Andover UU website.
- Office space for staff will be painted. Final plans for space use are in process.
- All building issues should be discussed with Cynthia Walsh first. This reminds us to address staff in relation to their specific roles.
- Rev. Rebecca will be away the week before Thanksgiving.
- The worship calendar is a living document, so changes are likely. The current version gives the Board a bird's eye view of plans for services.
- Rev. Laurel is at 75% time. She will share preaching with Rev. Rebecca with each leading some services, and some services led by both. Rev. Laurel will meet with Young Church one Sunday monthly.

Safety Task Force: Jim Supple reminded the board that we need to complete a safety policy/procedure, both about building security, and security, storage, and access of electronic records and personal information. A team is needed, and volunteers are needed to work on this.

Women's Alliance: The Alliance has asked for a change to make the best use of their funds held in our endowment. These funds have been designated to be used for the ongoing maintenance of the church building. These funds are available to be used, but it is difficult to move the funds from the endowment so that they can be used.

Action: Move Women's Alliance Funds

Motion: Minnie Flanagan moved that the Board approves a request from the Women's Alliance to move their funds to the operating budget and hold these funds in a designated line item.

Seconded by Tina Benik and passed without objection.

Governance: Tom Himmel

Action: Designation of a Chair Elect

Motion: Tom moved that the Board elect Bob Higgins as Chair Elect and confirm the election of Tina Benik as Chair. Seconded by Kathy Desilets and passed without objection.

Annual Meeting Review:

- Board members generally thought that the combination of the Annual Meeting with the Worship Service worked well. The only concerns were about the length of the meeting/service, but special recognition for Jo-an Carroll, the Bridging Ceremony for high school graduates, and a blessing for Justin Murphy-Mancini all added to the length of this very busy meeting.
- Passage of the 8th Principle was celebrated with congratulations to all involved. This action showed the value of board/congregation discussion.
- Lea Pearson showed her skills in settling the group and moving the meeting ahead. Tom Himmel will let her know that she will be needed for a special congregational meeting in September.

Congregational Insight Reflections: led by Rev. Rebecca

- We should do something related to the community with Parish Hall and we need to get down to a clear and specific plan.
- By late January we should vote on the use of Parish Hall.
- It is helpful to the congregation to see who is doing what and where decisions are made.
- We all need to know that we can't do everything. We need to focus on what is doable.
- We need to work on criteria for making decisions and we need to avoid focusing on the loudest voices.
- We still need to work on connections with the larger community, but we can hope that things will happen spontaneously as we work on our diverse projects.

System Access and Use Policy: Dan O'Shea, Director of Finance, and Jim Supple are working on this policy with the intent of clarifying and controlling who has access to our electronic systems and stored information. One aspect of this policy is to disable access when someone leaves a role in which they needed this access. Any comments should go to Jim.

Steeple Lighting Project: Jim Supple

Our steeple lights are currently not working. The estimated cost to repair them is between \$40,000 and \$60,000. We are looking for grantors to support this work as well as community fundraising. The Board discussed the idea of focusing on light. We might build a “Be the Light Fund.” We need to continue to think about how to engage the community in caring for our buildings.

A plan is underway to sell FRS apparel with a message such as “Be the Light” at Yankee Homecoming and the annual antique car show.

Note from the Trustees of the Endowment: We need a replacement for Bill Clary as Chair of the Trustees. The Trustees elect their own chair, and the person in this role will be critical for the group’s function and role as we carry out projects.

Recognition and Reflection:

Rev. Rebecca and the Board offered special acknowledgement to Annie Maurer for her work in organizing our congregational meetings. Jim Supple was acknowledged for the exceptional devotion of his talents and for his work leading the Board and contributing to many other activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Board Clerk