FRS Parish Board Meeting – November 20, 2024

Present: Tina Benik, Tom Himmel, Kathy Desilets, Jim Supple, Laurie Evans-Daly, Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Bob Higgins, Sarina Kahn Reddy, Andy Lobb, Lori Clark, Liss Larsen, Renée Wolf Foster (Names in **bold** are voting members.)

Not attending: Rev. Rebecca Bryan

Call to Order: Tina Benik called the meeting to order at 6:07pm

Opening:
Tina shared a reading from Pema Chödrön regarding patience and the ability to be open to what is happening in the current moment.

Lori Clark read the opening of the Board Covenant and Section 3 related to shared ministry in recognition of our need to help one another especially in challenging times.

Gift Acceptance Committee Recommendation: Barbara Owen house
Tina Benik convened a gift acceptance committee including herself, Lark Madden, Greg Benik, and Joe Brouillet to review a gift to FRS from Barbara Owen, on her death, of her house, its contents, and her car. The committee did a walk-through of the house, had a home inspection done to ensure that there were no major problems, and hired Mead, Talerman & Costa to ensure a clear deed. Following these steps, the committee recommends that the Board accept this legacy gift. This was the first use of the Gift Acceptance Policy which the board adopted recently.

ACTION: Approval of Gift Acceptance

> **Motion:** Minnie Flanagan moved that the Board (which is meeting with a quorum) vote to accept the gift described here under the conditions outlined here:
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> That the Church accept good, clean, and marketable title to the real estate located at 28 Jefferson Street, Newburyport, Massachusetts (the "Premises"), and the contents of the buildings located at the Premises and gifted to the Church by the Trustee of the Barbara Owen Revocable Trust under Declaration of Trust dated January 14, 2015, as amended and restated October 18, 2023 (the "Trust"), which gift is to be distributed upon the death of Barbara Owen.
>
> That the Church accept title to the automobile owned by Barbara Owen at the time of her death, or the proceeds from the sale of said automobile.
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> That the Church, upon receiving good, clean, and marketable title to the Premises, sell said Premises, and the contents contained therein, to bona fide purchasers for consideration. The Premises and the contents may be sold independently of each other, and certain of the contents, including a certain harpsichord, may be determined to be kept for use by the Church at the discretion of the Senior Minister and the Executive Committee of the Parish Board.

That the Board Finance Treasurer allocate the proceeds from the sale of the Premises, the sale of its contents and the sale of the automobile owned by Barbara Owen, equally between the Church's endowment fund and the Church's operating funds, with priority given to the needs of the Church's music program, as was the request of Barbara Owen.

That the Parish Board of the Church be and hereby is authorized and empowered, in the name and on behalf of the Church to receive any gift, be it real or personal property, by virtue of Chapter 44 of the Acts and Resolves of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the "Acts") of 1793.

That the Board Chair and the Board Finance Treasurer be and hereby are authorized and empowered from time to time, in the name and on behalf of the Church, to execute, make oath to, acknowledge, and deliver any and all such orders, directions, certificates, and other documents and papers, and to do or cause to be done any and all such acts and things, as may be shown by the Board's execution or performance thereof to be in the Board's judgment necessary or desirable in connection with the consummation of acceptance of the Premises, and contents therein, and the automobile owned by Barbara Owen at the time of her death, or the proceeds from the sale of said automobile, and subsequent sale of same, or as otherwise authorized by vote of the Parish Board, the taking of any such action to be conclusive evidence that the same is authorized by the Church.

ACTION: Acceptance of Gift

Motion: Minnie Flanagan moved acceptance of the gift described here under the conditions described above. Lori Clark seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Governance Update: Tom Himmel
Our bylaws require the Board to approve members of the Human Resources Committee. The current members are Leslie Lawrence (Chair), Hugh Martinez, Rebecca Brodish, Bob Higgins, Julie Menin.

ACTION: Approval of the Members of the Personnel Committee

Motion: Tom Himmel moved that the Board accepts the members of the Human Resources Committee as presented. Lori Clark seconded. and the motion passed without objection.

The Governance Committee, in collaboration with the Executive Committee and Rev. Rebecca, are developing Operating Process and Procedures for our committees, teams, and work groups. Tom presented documents defining Process and Procedures for the Facilities and Grants Teams. The Board convened these groups. These guidelines do not define operations but rather discuss relationships among committees and with the Executive and the Board. They define roles and levels of authority of committees or other congregational groups and of the Executive and the

Board. This will provide clarity of roles and the process of priority setting. Tina Benik noted that these process definitions are important to policy-based governance.

ACTION: Process and Procedures for Committees

> **Motion:** Jim Supple moved that the Board accept the processes and procedures presented to the meeting. Andy Lobb seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

Further discussion considered the various kinds of groups doing work for the church, their organization, and their responsibilities. Members of the Executive Committee defined three types of groups. The by-laws define standing or permanent committees. Board-chartered committees are charged by the Board to undertake specific tasks. Work groups are responsible for narrowly defined tasks. The Congregation votes on the chairs of the Governance, Finance and Stewardship committees who are members of the Board.

Stewardship Update: Renée Wolf Foster

- Cookie Walk/Sale is the next event, and planning is underway and going well. Including a table for signups for bakers and others who will work at the event has been a priority. Changing the name to "Cookie Sale" may improve understanding of the event. The leadership of the Cookie Sale group still needs volunteers for cleanup. Ghlee Woodworth, Andy Lobb, and Jim Supple will lead tours of the church.
- Planning for the Annual Giving Campaign has begun with the work of identifying chairs and finalizing the theme (currently leaning to *Be the Light: Make Love Real*). Renée suggested changing the names of the campaign leaders to Campaign Ambassadors to make these roles less intimidating.

Finance Update: Jim Supple

- New financial reports will provide the Board with a view of income and expenses, which is clearer and more concise.
- Currently our income status is strong with 40% of the anticipated annual income in hand. Steeple rentals are in place, and good returns have come in from weddings and other rentals.
- Expenses look good, but there are delayed payments, and historically utility costs are higher in winter.
- Grant income is separate from other items because it is not regular program income.
- We are currently in a positive budget position.

Systems Use Policy: Jim Supple

This policy will better protect our data and use of systems by providing clear definitions of access, which is on a need-to-know basis and overseen by staff. As this is the third reading, after a brief discussion, Jim called for a vote.

ACTION: Approval of the Systems Use Policy

> **Motion:** Bob Higgins moved to adopt the policy. Tom Himmel seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

4th Century Team: Vern Ellis

The 4th Century team serves a coordinating function with the teams working on forward planning (Congregational Insight, Facilities, Green Team, Planned Giving, Stewardship, Capital Campaign, Grant Development, and 300th Anniversary). Vern provided a written report. All groups are busy with projects and working toward improved collaboration. There will be a presentation on the work of the 4th Century team at the congregational meeting on Sunday. The meeting will also introduce plans for a Capital Campaign.

300th Anniversary: Laurie Evans-Daly

Laurie presented a schedule of planned events for the yearlong celebration (attached). The team is working on the garden party and tea and will give a schedule to the congregation on Sunday. Jim offered a strong recommendation for the Bed Race during Yankee Homecoming. The new history of the congregation is nearing completion.

Grants Team Update: Andy Lobb

- The team applied to Techworks for a grant of $80,000 to support HVAC work. This is a federal program and will be highly competitive. Grantor will release funding announcements in the spring.
- A $400 grant request was submitted to the local chapter of the Mass Cultural Council to support a drone video showing various perspectives of and from the church. The Mass Cultural Council did not approve this grant. The grantor's feedback was that there were more requests than they could fund and that our project did not describe community benefits as well as other applications. FRSUU was able to complete the drone project with other resources.

Board-Congregational Meeting: Andy Lobb

As part of the initiative started last year to provide more information to the congregation on the work of the Board, the Board will convene a congregational discussion immediately after service (11:30 -12:30) this Sunday. The topic of the discussion will be planning for our next century with a slide show and presentations from leaders of various elements of 4th Century Team. Andy requested that all Board members present sit together.

Consent Agenda: Kathy Desilets

The only item for consideration is the minutes of the previous meeting,

ACTION: Approval of minutes of the October 2024 meeting.

> **Motion:** Bob Higgins moved to approve the minutes. Jim Supple seconded, and the motion passed without opposition.

Update on Steeple Lights: Tina Benik
We expect a final quote with a specific contract proposal from American steeple soon which is expected to be within the funding amount authorized by the Board. In the meantime, in response to a request from Rev. Rebecca, Ed Budelmann, Forrest Speck, and Andy Lobb were able to install temporary lights in the steeple. Rev. Rebecca said that this was a miracle. Thanks to our miracle makers.

Closing:

ACTION: Adjournment of the meeting

> **Motion:** Kathy Desilets moved to adjourn at 7:40pm. Sarina Khan Reddy seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Parish Clerk