

First Congregational Society, Unitarian
Chelmsford, MA 01824

STATE OF THE SOCIETY MEETING

October 19, 2025



Link and connect info for the SoS meeting:

<https://www.uuchelmsford.org/congregational-meeting/>

Join Meeting: <http://meet.google.com/xwv-mmwf-ovt>

Or dial: (US) +1 209-425-2198 PIN: 817 423 032#

Topic: First Parish State of the Society Meeting

Time: October 19, 2025 11:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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WARRANT

The State of the Society Meeting of the First Congregational Society (Unitarian) will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2025 at 11:30AM in person and via Google Meet to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE I.	To elect a moderator (Sanctuary) & assistant moderator (Google Meet)
ARTICLE II.	To vote on the admission of new members.
ARTICLE III.	To vote to accept the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held June 8, 2025
ARTICLE IV.	To vote to accept the Auditor's Report for FY2025
ARTICLE V.	To vote to accept the Treasurer's Report for FY2025
ARTICLE VI.	To vote to accept the Collector's Report for FY2025
ARTICLE VII.	To vote to accept the Board of Investment Report for FY2025
ARTICLE VIII.	To vote on the distribution of the Eustace B. and Nancy M. Fiske Foundation \$20,000 grant funds from 2024.
ARTICLE IX.	To hear a presentation from the Standing Committee regarding the Carlene Merrill Fund. No vote will be taken.
ARTICLE X.	To open discussion to any other issues of concern to the members. No vote will be taken.
ARTICLE XI.	To vote to adjourn.

A True Copy Attest



Colleen Leary, Clerk

Voter's Guide

ARTICLE I.	We will elect two moderators, one for the meeting in the sanctuary and one for online participants attending via Google Meet.
ARTICLE II.	We will vote to approve any new members.
ARTICLE III.	We will vote to approve the Annual Meeting minutes held June 8, 2025 and included in your packet.
ARTICLE IV.	We will discuss and vote to approve the Auditor's Report for FY2025.
ARTICLE V.	We will vote to accept the Treasurer's Report for FY2025.
ARTICLE VI.	We will vote to accept the Collector's Report for FY2025.
ARTICLE VII.	We will vote to accept the Board of Investment Report for FY2025.
ARTICLE VIII.	We will vote on the distribution of the Eustace B. and Nancy M. Fiske Foundation \$20,000 grant funds from 2024 (please see the proposal at the end of the Treasurer's Report on page 13).
ARTICLE IX.	We will update the congregation on the Carlene Merrill Fund, its purpose, funds raised so far, and questions raised about revenue and church staffing in the future. No vote will be taken.
ARTICLE X.	We will entertain any additional items for discussion, but no vote will be taken.
ARTICLE XI.	We will vote to adjourn.

Draft Minutes from Annual Meeting Held June 8, 2025:

Minutes of the June 8, 2025 Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Society, Unitarian Chelmsford, MA

Preliminary: The Clerk, Rose Lerer, confirmed that a 25 person quorum was present in the sanctuary. Eight absentee ballots were received before the meeting. There were at least 37 voting members in the Sanctuary. In addition, there were other voting members online. Therefore, the meeting could commence.

- I. John Schneider, Chair of the Standing Committee, welcomed the people and asked for a nomination for Moderator. Joan Coyne was nominated as Moderator by Rose Lerer. Sarah Manning seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Neil Harmon was monitoring the information from online attendees.
- II. Joan Coyne asked for a vote to accept the Minutes of the State of the Society Congregational Meeting held on October 6, 2024. John Schneider made a motion. Don Hayden seconded. The vote was unanimous.
- III. To vote on the admission of new members. This includes Rachel Hearn, Cayenne Outerbridge, Gwen Ratte Meins, Melissa Sloan, Alan Sloan, Teri Heard-Ralbovsky, and Kathy Talbot. Ron Deschenes made a motion. Warren Flewellen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

- IV. To vote on the following nominated candidates for the 2025-2026 church year.

Standing Committee:

Tom Coffey 2024-2027 year (1 year renewable)

Ami Hughes 2025-2028

Doug Snow 2025-2028

Clerk: Colleen Leary 2025-2026 (1 year)

Treasurer: Dave Kaffine 2025-2026 (1 year)

Board of Investment:

Garland Kemper 2025-2029 (4 years)

Nominating Committee:

John Fisher 2025-2026 (1 year renewable)

Tip Rawding 2025-2026 (1 year renewable)

Abby Ransdell 2025-2028 (3 years)

Other:

Collector: Carla Corey 2025-2026 (1 year)

Assistant Treasurer: Sarah Manning 2025-2026 (1 year)

Susan Woodmansee made a motion to accept the candidates. John Schneider seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

- V. To vote on Fiscal Year 2026 budget. Treasurer Dave Kaffine talked about the budget. The minister's salary is split between salary and housing. There was an administrative change
- VI. Dave Kaffine proposed a motion to accept the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. Walter Cole seconded the motion. The FY 2026 budget was unanimously approved.
- VII. To vote on the proposed cell tower budget. (We only have one cell tower at this time.) Dave Kaffine explained the line items. Dave Kaffine made a motion to approve this item. Laura Nutter noted seconded the motion. The congregation voted unanimously.
- VIII. To vote on the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Improvements and the Long Range Plan. Dave Kaffine gave an explanation of the issues. Dave Kaffine made a motion to approve this issue. Laura Nutter seconded the motion. The congregation voted unanimously.

- IX.** To ordain Brian Snow as a Community Minister affiliated with the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Chelmsford. John Schneider stressed that we were not ordaining Brian on this day but we will be having a formal service in the fall. Colleen Leary made a motion. John Schneider seconded the motion. The congregation voted unanimously.
- X.** To vote on delegates to the 2025 UUA General Assembly. Carla Corey was the only person to ask to be a delegate (at the time of the meeting). Don Hayden made a motion to approve Carla as a delegate. Sarah Manning seconded the motion. The congregation voted unanimously. There is another seat for a delegate. If someone wants to be another delegate, they should contact the Standing Committee.
- XI.** No vote, just discussion: Joan Coyne presented information (by the Worship Committee) to have a discussion on the possibility of having video screens on either side of the pulpit. There is a team that will be looking into the details of the video screens. If anyone wants to join the team that will be working on that project over the summer, contact Joan Coyne, Dave Kaffine, or Neil Harmon. Refer to the document that Joan Coyne created.
- XII.** No vote, just discussion: Open discussion to any issues of concern to the members. No one had any issue that they wanted to discuss.
- XIII.** To vote to adjourn the meeting. Elaine Mahoney made a motion to adjourn. Ramon Cervantes seconded the motion. All present approved the motion to adjourn.

Auditor's Report 2024 – 2025

*The Auditor's Report was not available at the time of publication/printing.

Treasurer's Report for FY25 - Ending June 30, 2025

FY25 is the second year in my current term as Treasurer. I would like to thank the members of the Finance Committee for their assistance in overseeing and reviewing our church finances: Diana Keohane (most recent Treasurer), Nancy Kaelin, Chris Sweetnam, Neil Harmon (current Assistant Treasurer), Rebecca Gore, and Tom Coffey. Additional thanks to Susan DeMinico (our new Bookkeeper), and Carla Corey (Collector) for their work in keeping our financial records up to date.

As in previous years, the budget that the congregation passed for FY25 was intentionally not balanced – it had a \$10,600 deficit, with the expectation based on history that we would still end the year with a surplus. That was not the case this year – while it was not as large as budgeted, we did end the year with a \$6,600 deficit. The primary contributions are outlined below.

The main contributors to the discrepancies between budgeted and actual finances were:

- Income was \$8K lower than budgeted. This was a result of pledge income being below budget. About half of this stems from some misunderstanding of the final Canvass total, and the other half is a result of the pledge fulfillment rate being a little lower than in previous years. But First Parish continues to be a very generous community, and we received 95% of our FY25 pledges.
- While expenses were also lower than budgeted, they were not as much lower as they have been in previous years. In particular, it was reported last fall that utility expenses had not been adequately budgeted, and indeed they ended the year \$5,400 over budget.

Both of these items have already been addressed in the FY26 budget.

One thing that has not been factored into the FY25 budget was the generous \$20,000 grant that we received from the Eustace B. and Nancy M. Fiske Foundation. These funds are restricted for the physical maintenance and repair of the church. The following pages include a report showing that there were eligible expenses in FY25 that exceeded the amount of this grant. This effectively means that we did end FY25 with a surplus, and the church is still in very good financial health.

Thanks to everyone in the First Parish community for your generous contributions of time, talent, and treasure. More detailed FY25 financial information can be found in the reports on the following pages.

I am looking forward to finishing out my term as Treasurer with one more year of service. If anyone ever has questions or concerns about the financial operations of First Parish, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Reports Attached

- June 30, 2025 - Balance Sheet (with 6/30/24 comparison)
- FY25 Income and Expense vs Budget – Summary Report
- FY25 Income and Expense vs Budget – Detail Report
- Restricted Funds – Fiske Foundation summary

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Kaffine, Treasurer

First Congregational Society, Unitarian
Statement of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2025

	Total	
	As of Jun 30, 2025	As of Jun 30, 2024 (PP)
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
1012 Enterprise Bank	44,934.37	38,826.48
1013 Enterprise - Min. Discretionary	4,134.28	9,525.29
1014 Enterprise - Debit Cards	679.37	1,904.20
1015 Fidelity Investments	242,184.49	210,387.35
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 291,932.51	\$ 260,643.32
Total Current Assets	\$ 291,932.51	\$ 260,643.32
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 291,932.51	\$ 260,643.32
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
2400 Temporary Holding Funds		
2808 Due to Carlene Merrill Fund	100.00	
Total 2400 Temporary Holding Funds	\$ 100.00	\$ 0.00
2410 Fiske Foundation Grant	20,000.00	
2420 Community Table Fund	1,634.32	2,492.31
2430 SC Discretionary Fund	2,451.64	522.12
2760 Pledges Next Year	23,840.00	15,890.06
2780 Faith In Action Grants	3,821.14	2,821.14
2811 Ministers Discretionary Funds	5,134.28	9,525.29
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ 56,981.38	\$ 31,250.92
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 56,981.38	\$ 31,250.92
Long-Term Liabilities		
2300 Reserve Funds		
2320 Service Programs Fund	1,999.71	4.71
2330 Facilities Reserves Fund	12,096.61	3,508.49
2340 Operating Reserves	124,945.95	110,942.02
Total 2300 Reserve Funds	\$ 139,042.27	\$ 114,455.22
2774 Capital Improvements Fund	-4,045.52	-149.54
2776 Minister Sabbatical Fund	2,000.00	0.00
2777 Steeple Fund	53,396.00	51,396.00
2782A Service Trips - Johan Memorial	9,030.00	9,030.00
2784 Ministerial Intern Fund	3,000.00	1,000.00
2787 General Assembly Trip Fund	-110.00	300.00
2788 All Church Retreat Fund	2,418.44	418.44
2792 Health Insurance Fund	7,767.90	7,767.90
2816 Hand Bells	1,238.50	1,088.50
2818 Organ repair and maint.	939.00	839.00
2880 Information Technology Fund	3,123.76	4,077.97
2890 Building Equip and Repair	4,159.74	4,493.00
2891 Reserve Snow Removal	5,500.00	9,500.00
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$ 227,460.09	\$ 204,216.49
Total Liabilities	\$ 284,441.47	\$ 235,467.41
Equity		
1016 Fidelity Unrealized Gain/Loss	14,074.93	5,947.88
3010 Unrestrict (retained earnings)	0.	

First Congregational Society, Unitarian
Budget vs. Actuals: FY_2024_2025 - FY25 P&L
 July 2024 - June 2025

	Actual	Budget	Total over Budget	% of Budget
Revenue				
4000 Operating Income			0.00	
Total 4010 Collectors Deposit	\$ 275,120.49	\$ 283,480.40	-\$ 8,359.91	97.05%
Total 4020 Fund Raising	\$ 14,606.27	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 1,606.27	112.36%
Total 4030 Building Use	\$ 25,835.00	\$ 27,240.00	-\$ 1,405.00	94.84%
4040 Investment Income	74,000.00	74,000.00	0.00	100.00%
4041 Cell Tower 2 tranfers to Operat	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00	100.00%
4043 Prev Yr Surplus Carried Forward	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 4000 Operating Income	\$ 408,561.76	\$ 416,720.40	-\$ 8,158.64	98.04%
4052 Return Check Fee	-12.00		-12.00	
Total Revenue	\$ 408,549.76	\$ 416,720.40	-\$ 8,170.64	98.04%
Gross Profit	\$ 408,549.76	\$ 416,720.40	-\$ 8,170.64	98.04%
Expenditures				
Total 7200 Salaries & related expenses	\$ 280,027.55	\$ 285,796.36	-\$ 5,768.81	97.98%
Total 7500 Other personnel expenses	\$ 1,065.59	\$ 2,700.00	-\$ 1,634.41	39.47%
Total 8100 Operating Expenses	\$ 29,292.61	\$ 38,222.83	-\$ 8,930.22	76.64%
Total 8200 Building Expenses	\$ 66,005.02	\$ 61,674.00	\$ 4,331.02	107.02%
Total 8300 OutReach	\$ 20,266.00	\$ 20,266.00	\$ 0.00	100.00%
Total 8500 Committees	\$ 16,476.88	\$ 16,692.00	-\$ 215.12	98.71%
Total 8600 Other Expenses	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 0.00	100.00%
Total Expenditures	\$ 415,133.65	\$ 427,351.19	-\$ 12,217.54	97.14%
Net Operating Revenue	-\$ 6,583.89	-\$ 10,630.79	\$ 4,046.90	61.93%
Net Revenue	-\$ 6,583.89	-\$ 10,630.79	\$ 4,046.90	61.93%

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First Congregational Society, Unitarian
Budget vs. Actuals: FY_2024_2025 - FY25 P&L
 July 2024 - June 2025

	Actual	Budget	Total over Budget	% of Budget
Revenue				
4000 Operating Income			0.00	
4010 Collectors Deposit			0.00	
4011 Prior Year Pledges	9,391.00	8,000.00	1,391.00	117.39%
4012 Current Year Pledges	256,662.06	267,680.40	-11,018.34	95.88%
4013 Known Donors	3,160.00	3,000.00	160.00	105.33%
4014 Sanctuary Plate	6,189.48	5,000.00	1,189.48	123.79%
4015 Online Donation Fees	-282.05	-200.00	-82.05	141.03%
Total 4010 Collectors Deposit	\$ 275,120.49	\$ 283,480.40	-\$ 8,359.91	97.05%
4020 Fund Raising			0.00	
4023 July 4th Net		0.00	0.00	
4023A July 4th Income	2,533.00	2,000.00	533.00	126.65%
4023B July 4th Expense	-460.32	-500.00	39.68	92.06%
Total 4023 July 4th Net	\$ 2,072.68	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 572.68	138.18%
4025 Holiday Fair Net		1,500.00	-1,500.00	0.00%
4025A Holiday Fair Income	4,156.00		4,156.00	
4025B Holiday Fair Expense	-1,867.68		-1,867.68	
Total 4025 Holiday Fair Net	\$ 2,288.32	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 788.32	152.55%
4027 Auction Net		9,000.00	-9,000.00	0.00%
4027A Auction Income	10,442.00		10,442.00	
4027B Auction Expense	-196.73		-196.73	
Total 4027 Auction Net	\$ 10,245.27	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 1,245.27	113.84%
4029 Other Fundraising Net		1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.00%
Total 4020 Fund Raising	\$ 14,606.27	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 1,606.27	112.36%
4030 Building Use			0.00	
4031 Alcoholics Anonymous	1,900.00	1,500.00	400.00	126.67%
4032 Overeaters Anonymous	705.00	400.00	305.00	176.25%
4033 Room Rentals- Other	3,390.00	5,000.00	-1,610.00	67.80%
4036 Nursery School	19,840.00	19,840.00	0.00	100.00%
4039 Weddings, Funerals		500.00	-500.00	0.00%
Total 4030 Building Use	\$ 25,835.00	\$ 27,240.00	-\$ 1,405.00	94.84%
4040 Investment Income	74,000.00	74,000.00	0.00	100.00%
4041 Cell Tower 2 tranfers to Operat	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00	100.00%
4043 Prev Yr Surplus Carried Forward				

7316 LTD Insurance DFF	817.92	817.88	0.04	100.00%
7317 Life Insurance DFF	528.48	528.48	0.00	100.00%
Total 7300 Director of Faith Formation	\$ 76,164.25	\$ 75,270.26	\$ 893.99	101.19%
7320 Director of Music			0.00	
7322 Salary Director of Music	31,187.52	31,187.52	0.00	100.00%
7323 Pension/Music/Employer	3,118.80	3,118.75	0.05	100.00%
7325 Prof Allowance Music Director	1,473.97	2,339.06	-865.09	63.02%
7326 LTD Music Director	405.48	405.44	0.04	100.01%
7327 Life Insurance Music Director	261.96	261.98	-0.02	99.99%
Total 7320 Director of Music	\$ 36,447.73	\$ 37,312.75	-\$ 865.02	97.68%
7335 Salary Office Assistant	17,347.76	18,165.24	-817.48	95.50%
7370 Faith Formation Assistant	6,767.60	7,393.92	-626.32	91.53%
7399 Derate actual employee hours		-1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
7400 Payroll taxes	8,859.24	9,077.54	-218.30	97.60%
7405 Health care reimbursement	9,805.18	16,500.00	-6,694.82	59.43%
7406 Derate Health Reimbursement		-2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%
7600 Next Year Merit salary bucket		11.16	-11.16	0.00%
Total 7200 Salaries & related expenses	\$ 280,027.55	\$ 285,796.36	-\$ 5,768.81	97.98%
7500 Other personnel expenses			0.00	
7520 Staff Development		400.00	-400.00	0.00%
7530 Staff Recognition	106.34	300.00	-193.66	35.45%
7540 WC Insurance	959.25	2,000.00	-1,040.75	47.96%
Total 7500 Other personnel expenses	\$ 1,065.59	\$ 2,700.00	-\$ 1,634.41	39.47%
8100 Operating Expenses			0.00	
8110 Office Supplies	397.56	500.00	-102.44	79.51%
8120 Information Technology	3,982.29	4,000.00	-17.71	99.56%
8130 Telephone	2,826.46	2,400.00	426.46	117.77%
8135 Cell Phones	1,698.97	2,000.00	-301.03	84.95%
Total 8130 Telephone	\$ 4,525.43	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 125.43	102.85%
8140 Postage, shipping, delivery	501.04	500.00	1.04	100.21%
8150 Printers and Copiers			0.00	
8151 Lease/Maintenance Contract	2,628.00	2,628.00	0.00	100.00%
8154 Printer and Copier supplies	551.50	400.00	151.50	137.88%
Total 8150 Printers and Copiers				

8252 Custodial Supplies	1,331.00	1,200.00	131.00	110.92%
Total 8250 Custodial Service and Supplies	\$ 12,019.00	\$ 10,200.00	\$ 1,819.00	117.83%
8260 Maintenance Building			0.00	
8261 General Maintenance	3,704.38	3,200.00	504.38	115.76%
8262 HVAC Maintenance	612.50	1,900.00	-1,287.50	32.24%
8263 Kitchen Maintenance	429.00	700.00	-271.00	61.29%
Total 8260 Maintenance Building	\$ 4,745.88	\$ 5,800.00	-\$ 1,054.12	81.83%
8271 Snow Removal		7,500.00	-7,500.00	0.00%
8271A Snow removal expenses	11,855.86		11,855.86	
8271B Snow removal to/from escrow	-4,000.00		-4,000.00	
Total 8271 Snow Removal	\$ 7,855.86	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 355.86	104.74%
8272 Trash Removal	2,620.96	2,000.00	620.96	131.05%
8280 Insurance	10,609.00	10,700.00	-91.00	99.15%
Total 8200 Building Expenses	\$ 66,005.02	\$ 61,674.00	\$ 4,331.02	107.02%
8300 OutReach			0.00	
8310 UUA Contributions	20,266.00	20,266.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 8300 OutReach	\$ 20,266.00	\$ 20,266.00	\$ 0.00	100.00%
8500 Committees			0.00	
8501 Committee derating factor		-3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00%
8515 Archives		50.00	-50.00	0.00%
8521 Welcoming Congregation	169.92	1,940.00	-1,770.08	8.76%
8525 Canvass		100.00	-100.00	0.00%
8530 Caring Connections		200.00	-200.00	0.00%
8535 Flowers	61.91	300.00	-238.09	20.64%
8538 Green Ministry	378.46	200.00	178.46	189.23%
8540 Grounds	409.64	800.00	-390.36	51.21%
8545 House Management	99.82	150.00	-50.18	66.55%
8555 Membership	620.59	650.00	-29.41	95.48%
8557 Ministry		50.00	-50.00	0.00%
8560 Music	3,749.97	3,732.00	17.97	100.48%
8570 Parish Affairs	101.84	760.00	-658.16	13.40%
8572 Pastoral Care	146.00		146.00	
8575 Publicity	278.78	310.00	-31.22	89.93%
8580 Lifespan Faith Formation	7,229.15	7,150.00	79.15	101.11%
8585 Social Action	317.63	1,075.00	-757.37	29.55%
8590 Standing Committee	531.3			

First Congregational Society, Unitarian
Transaction List by Tag Group - Restricted Funds
July 2024 - June 2025

	Date	Transaction Type	Num	Name	Description	Amount
Fiske Foundation	07/09/2024	Check	11445	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - July	-502.00
	07/23/2024	Check	11459	New England Fire & Sprinkler Protection	Annual monitoring fee	-894.00
	08/14/2024	Check	11471	DS General Services Corp	Vestry floor buff and finish	-1,200.00
	09/10/2024	Check	11481	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - August	-502.00
	09/24/2024	Check	11487	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - September	-502.00
	10/02/2024	Check	11492	Martell Fire Equipment Co	Annual fire extinguisher inspection	-479.25
	10/02/2024	Check	11493	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - October	-502.00
	10/10/2024	Check	11502	TJ Construction	Rot repair	-1,450.00
	10/12/2024	Check	11503	New England Fire & Sprinkler Protection	Technicians on site for state elevator inspection	-1,068.00
	10/24/2024	Check	11506	Eric C Foster	Boiler service	-450.00
	11/04/2024	Deposit		Eustace B. and Nancy M. Fiske Foundation	Foundation grant	20,000.00
	11/05/2024	Check	11514	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - November	-502.00
	11/05/2024	Check	11517	Eric C Foster	Combustion analysis on boiler	-112.50
	12/01/2024	Check	11537	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - December	-502.00
	12/10/2024	Check	11540	Walter Cole	Water filters, outlet, switch, light bulbs	-233.23
	01/09/2025	Check	11570	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - January	-535.00
	02/04/2025	Check	11596	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - February	-535.00
	02/20/2025	Check	11609	Hood Solutions, Inc	Hood inspection	-250.00
	02/23/2025	Check	11614	Walter Cole	Internet batteries, emergency light batteries, emergency light	-75.02
	02/26/2025	Check	11615	TJ Construction	Drop ceiling repair	-400.00
	02/26/2025	Check	11618	Walter Cole	AED pads & attic lumber	-217.51
	03/02/2025	Check	11621	New England Fire & Sprinkler Protection	Heat detector replacement, round 1	-1,375.00
	03/09/2025	Check	11625	Walter Cole	Door astragal with weatherstrip	-128.62
	03/09/2025	Check	11626	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - March	-535.00
	03/19/2025	Check	11632	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Boiler inspection / certificate	-50.00
	04/09/2025	Check	11652	New England Fire & Sprinkler Protection	Heat detector replacement, round 2	-4,707.88
	04/09/2025	Check	11653	Stanley Elevator Company, Inc	Monthly maintenance - April	-

Proposed Distribution of the Eustace B. and Nancy M. Fiske Foundation Grant Funds From 2024

First Parish received an unexpected grant of \$20,000 last year from the Eustace B. and Nancy M. Fiske Foundation to be used for the physical maintenance and repair of the church in memory of the Fiske families who had been active in the church since it was founded by the Reverend John Fiske in 1655.

Since this was unexpected, we had budgeted other ways to cover our expenses. But we did document qualified building expenses in FY25 in excess of \$20,000, which effectively turns the grant into unrestricted funds that can be allocated by congregational vote.

The Standing Committee recommends that the congregation approve the following distribution of these funds:

- \$6,583.89 to cover the FY25 budget deficit
- \$7,416.11 to apply to FY26 operating budget in lieu of "Previous Year surplus"
- \$6,000.00 to be added to Capital Improvement Funds for FY26 and FY27 projects

Note: we will be receiving a similar grant from the Fiske Foundation this year, but as it is now expected, it was already incorporated into the FY26 operating and long-range planning budgets approved by the congregation last June.

Collector's Report 2024 – 2025

Please find below a record of all deposits processed through the Collector for FY2025. As always I am appreciative of the help received from Office Staff – namely Erica Clifford and Susan DeMinico – and from our Treasurer, Dave Kaffine.

Once again I feel it is important to lift up the continued generosity of our First Parish community. Thank you for that and for the trust you have placed in me allowing me to serve the Congregation in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,
Carla Corey, Collector

<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Total</u>
2023-2024 Pledge	2,985.00
2024-2025 Pledge	241,417.00
2025-2026 Pledge	23,920.00
Carlene Merrill Fund	3,270.00
Known Donor	3,085.00
Loose Collection	6,189.48
Share-the-Plate	1,278.55
Minister's Discretionary Fund	1,725.00
Stop Pymt Reimbursement	12.00
Total	<u>\$ 283,882.03</u>

First Congregational Society (Unitarian) Account Totals For 07/01/2024 - 06/30/2025

Account Name	Cash	Check	CC#	Direct	Online	Other	Total
2023-2024 Pledge	\$0.00	\$2,985.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,985.00
2024-2025 Pledge	\$596.0	\$234,471.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,350.00	\$0.00	\$241,417.00
2025-2026 Pledge	\$40.00	\$23,740.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$140.00	\$0.00	\$23,920.00
Carlene Merrill Fund	\$180.00	\$3,070.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$3,270.00
FP Malden Trans Fund - Pink Haven	\$257.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$257.50
Known Donor	\$20.00	\$2,655.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$410.00	\$0.00	\$3,085.00
Loose Collection (AM)	\$5,749.95	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,749.95
Loose Collection (PM)	\$439.53	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$439.53
Merrimack Valley Food Bank	\$181.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$181.00
Mill City Grows	\$265.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$265.00
Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$0.00	\$1,725.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,725.00
Misc.	\$0.00	\$12.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12.00
UU Disaster Relief	\$294.55	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$294.55
World Central Kitchen	\$280.5	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$280.50
Totals:	\$8,304.03	\$268,658.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,920.00	\$0.00	\$283,882.03

Board of Investments FY 2025 Annual Report

The Board of Investments is tasked with overseeing the investment of the Society’s endowment funds, keeping an accurate accounting of said funds, and recommending a sum to be used in defraying the annual operating budget. The Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Board of Investment.

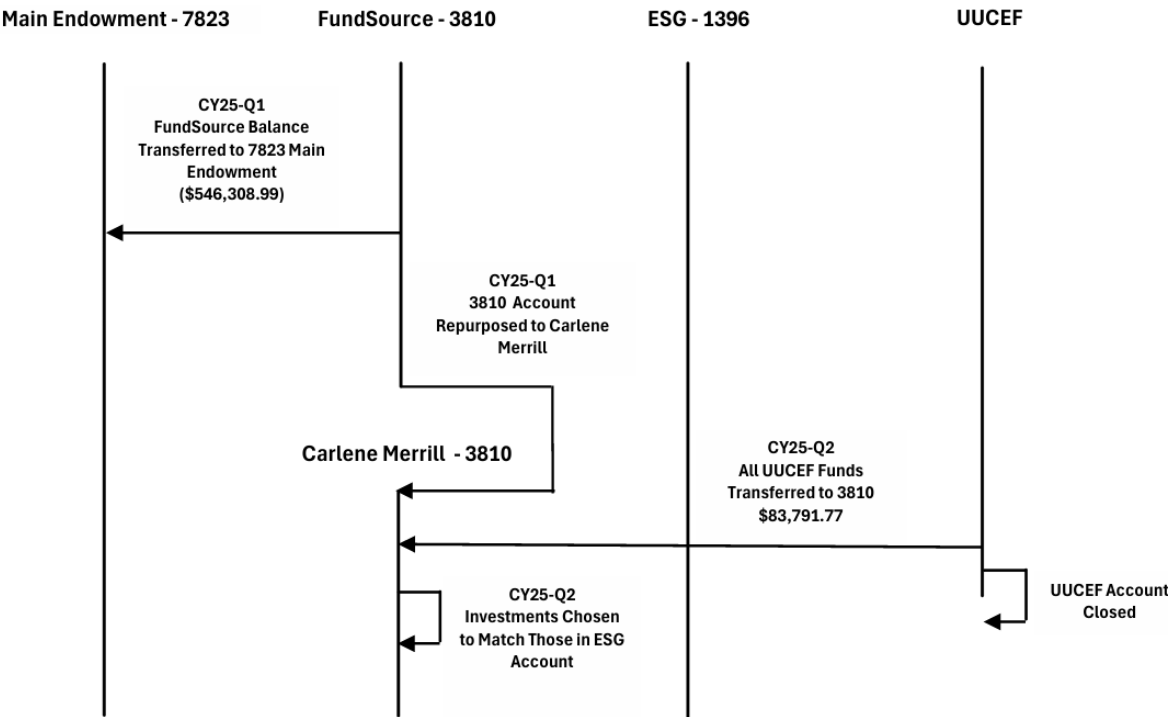
The Board of Investments is tasked with overseeing the investment of the Society’s endowment funds, keeping an accurate accounting of said funds, and recommending a sum to be used in defraying the annual operating budget. The Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Board of Investment.

The Board suggested at the beginning of this calendar year that the church income for the 2026 fiscal year be an amount equal to 4% of a rolling average of the portfolio balance for the last 13 calendar quarters prior to December 31st, equaling \$75,000 annually, or \$18,750 per quarter.

Significant changes were made during this fiscal year that included the movement of funds to achieve more efficient management of the church’s investments. Funds in our (...3810) Burbank FundSource account were transferred to our main (...7823) account, allowing for a reduction in management fees. Subsequently, our (...3810) account was repurposed to become the new home for our Carlene Merrill human resource funds. The UUCEF Carlene Merrill account was then closed and its assets were moved to the (...3810) Burbank account. The investments in the (...3810) account were then chosen to mirror those in our Burbank ESG (...1396) account, thus preserving our commitment to socially responsible investing. The closure of our UUCEF account resolves a long outstanding problem of difficulties acquiring data in time for our end-of-quarter reporting. Timing, dollar amounts, and other details about these changes can be found in the BOI quarterly reports housed in the church’s Google Docs library.

Overall quarterly performance during this fiscal year reflected market volatility and was mixed, with two down and two up quarters. Coupled with that, the performance of some individual accounts was hard to measure because of fund transfer activities. With that said, our total holdings grew \$178,807.02 or 8.77% from a June 30, 2024, value of \$2,039,638.14 to a June 30, 2025, value of \$2,218,445.16.

Calendar Year 2025 Board of Investment Account Changes
B. Jefferson 2025-08-24 Rev 02



This year we retained last year's refinement in our investment strategy. At that time, to support the goal of providing maximum portfolio balance in a turbulent market, we rebalanced our (...7823) Burbank Wealth account by trading a portion of our American Funds for Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). This trade brought the account into a better balance of small- and mid-cap equities, with 61.7% being in the American Mutual Funds, 37.3% in ETFs, and 0.88% in cash. This account, which supports the church's operating budget through both income and equity sales, contains approximately 86% of our portfolio holdings.

The (...3810) Carlene Merrill account represents around 4.2% of our total holdings. It is invested in socially responsible funds that mirror those in our (...1396) ESG account.

The (...1396) Wells Fargo ESG socially responsible fund is a managed package of 11 mutual funds and 3 Stock ETF funds that contains the remaining 9.7% of our Burbank Wealth holdings.

This year the committee extends its thanks to Nancy Kaelin for her excellent years of leadership and welcomes Garland Kemper as a new member to the board.

The Board meets on the 4th Monday of January, April, July, and October, with additional meetings as required. All meetings are open to members of the parish.

Barry Jefferson, Chairman
Ramon Cervantes, Financial Officer
Garland Kemper Financial Reviewer
Warren Flewellen, Secretary
Dave Kaffine, Treasurer

Our Endowment Funds designated "Miscellaneous Bequests for General Use" were given by or in honor of the following people:

Deacon Otis Adams	1876	300.00	Glenn & Phyllis King	1999	100.00
Ephraim Parkhurst	1879	450.00	C. Richmond Page	2000	5000.00
Donations	1883	200.00	Charles Ruiter	2000	1215.00
O. Emerson	1885	316.67	Carl McKittrick	2000	1440.00
Martha P. Dickson	1889	12.00	Charlotte DeWolf	2000	480.00
Joseph Warren	1890	1000.00	Julia Fogg	2000	295.84
Henrietta Richardson	1896	100.00	Dorothy Cook	2000	1050.00
Benjamin Fiske	1901	1000.00	Alan Kent	2000	977.49
Jeremiah J. Shedd	1902	200.00	Madelon Clough	2003	10000.00
Sarah P. Emerson	1903	100.00	Beth & Carole	2004	685.00
A. Howard Richardson	1904	150.00	Robert Russell	2004-5	2345.00
Jos. & Benj. Fiske	1905	1500.00	Hazel Fiske	2004	375.00
Emily Reid	1910	100.00	Roman Muniichiello	2005	250.00
M.C. Reed	1911	100.00	Maxine McKittrick	2005	635.00
Silina G. Richardson	1915	200.00	Reid & Anna Johnston	2005	500.00
Church members	1913	135.15	Eleanor Butterfield	2006	10824.60
Cora A.G. Flint	1922	3000.00	Joan Russell	2008	550.00
Mary E. Richardson	1926	100.00	Wilson Family	2008	200.00
Celia A. Richardson	1926	100.00	David Johnston	2008	500.00
Martha Warren	1939	110.41	Jane Drury	2009-10	1945.00
Anna Searle	1941	200.00	Shirley Martino	2010	285.00
F.A.P. Fiske	1943	3000.00	Madelon Clough	2010	125.00
Albert H. Davis	1944	300.00	Roy Mellen	2010	565.00
Frank Emerson	1957	6726.50	Barbara Parkhurst	2011	410.00
Parker Fund	1957	409.40	Geoffrey Jody	2011	375.00
Edith Perham	1958	1000.00	Dennis Doughty	2013	2500.00
Edith W. Emerson	1958	1000.00	John E. Anastos	2013	150.00
Unitarian Players	1963	500.00	Barbara Crouch	2013	300.00
Misc. Mem. Fnds	1964	115.00	Cynthia Watson	2017	61811.30
Anonymous	1971	348.50	Thomas Wight	2019	2175.00
Ethel C. Bartlett	1973	1000.00	Audrey Wilson	2019	300.00
Levi Howard	1975	1000.00	Larry Pelosi	2019	100.00
William T. Shafer	1986	1000.			

Report of the Board of Investments

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Rev 02 2025-08-28 Final R. Cervantes & B. Jefferson

Summary of Holdings
Not Audited

Burbank Managed UMA Mutual Funds and ETF Account

(Account 7823)

Purpose: holdings that support general operating expenses and include a combination of restricted and unrestricted funds
(In March 2025, the entire FundSource 3810 account (\$546,308.99) was transferred into this account.)

Value 6/30/24	FY25 Withdrawals	FY25 Deposits	Value 6/30/25*	Management Fees	Total Return**	Percent Return**	Percent of Portfolio
\$1,226,262.27	\$47,857.04	\$100.00	\$1,907,970.54	\$10,551.43	\$183,156.32	14.94%	86.00%
Holding		Value 6/30/24	Value 6/30/25	Percent of General Fund			
Cash/ Money Market Sweep		\$17,648.84	\$16,701.81	0.88%			
WASHINGTON MUTUAL INVESTORS FUND (F2) WMFFX		\$264,064.25	\$435,905.13	22.85%			
THE GROWTH FUND OF AMERICA (F2) GFFFX		\$210,196.40	\$318,600.97	16.70%			
INCOME FUND OF AMERICA (F2) AMEFX		\$121,946.27	\$194,043.14	10.17%			
BOND FUND OF AMERICA (F2) ABNFX		\$79,621.89	\$120,827.77	6.33%			
EUROPACIFIC GROWTH FUND (F2) AEPFX		\$57,180.00	\$109,740.70	5.75%			
VANGUARD SM CAP VALUE ETF VBR		\$108,781.92	\$156,398.02	8.20%			
VANGUARD HIGH DIV YIELD VYM		\$107,095.80	\$162,904.82	8.54%			
iShares Russell Mid-cap Value ETF IWS		\$60,249.26	\$88,665.94	4.65%			
VANGUARD LONG TERM CORPORATE BOND ETF VCLT		\$59,701.82	\$89,789.70	4.71%			
ISHARES CORE US AGGREGATE BOND ETF AGG		\$59,503.91	\$90,172.80	4.73%			
ISHARES CORE MSCI EMERGING MARKETS ETF IEMG		\$59,793.01	\$93,526.74	4.90%			
VANGUARD SHORT-TERM BOND BSV		\$20,478.90	\$30,693.00	1.61%			
			Total:	100.00%			

* Includes Funds Transferred from Fundsource Totaling: \$546,308.99
**Return figures do not account for time-weighted returns on deposits/withdrawals/transfers into/from account

Burbank Managed Fundsource Account

(Account 3810)

Repurposed on 4/22/25 to hold Carlene Merrill funds originally held in UUA/UUCEF

Value 6/30/24	FY25 Withdrawals	FY25 Deposits	Total Transfers to Main 7823	Value 3/31/25	Management Fees	Total Return*	Percent Return*	Percent of Portfolio
\$537,888.47	\$26,142.96	\$0.00	\$546,308.99	\$0.00	\$4,066.36	\$34,563.48	6.43%	0.00%
*Partial Year								

Burbank Managed Carlene Merrill Fund Account

(Account 3810)

Repurposed from Fundsource on 4/22/25 to hold Carlene Merrill funds originally held in UUA/UUCEF

Purpose: Established by the estate of Carlene Merrill upon her passing, this restricted fund is designated to support Human Resources

Value 3/31/25	Transfer from UUCEF 4/22/25	FY25 Withdrawals	FY25 Deposits	Value 6/30/25	Management Fees	Total Return*	Percent Return*	Percent of Portfolio
\$0.00	\$83,791.77	\$0.00	\$3,845.00	\$94,882.49	\$174.03	\$7,245.72	8.65%	4.28%
*Partial Year								

Burbank Managed ESG Account

(Account 1396)

Purpose: Holdings of socially responsible investments

Value 6/30/24	FY25 Withdrawals	FY25 Deposits	Value 6/30/25	Management Fees	Total Return	Percent Return	Percent of Portfolio
\$195,767.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$215,592.13	\$2,041.16	\$19,824.83	10.13%	9.72%

UUA/UUCEF Managed Carlene Merrill HR Fund

Purpose: Established by the estate of Carlene Merrill upon her passing, this restricted fund is designated to support Human Resources

(On 4/22/2025, the entire account (\$84,466.77) was transferred to Burbank 3810.)

Value 6/30/24	FY25 Withdrawals	FY25 Deposits	Transfer to Burbank 4/22/25	Value 6/30/25	Management Fees	Total Return*	Percent Return*	Percent of Portfolio
\$79,720.10	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,791.77	\$0.00	\$565.84	\$4,071.67	5.11%	0.00%
*Partial Year								

Totals:	\$2,039,638.14	\$74,000.00	\$3,945.00	\$2,218,445.16	\$17,398.82	\$248,862.02	12.20%	100.00%
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Summary of Funds

Note: the meaning of a Fund in this context is a pool of money donated by someone to honor individuals and/or provide for specific needs of the church.

A Restricted Fund is one that, by formal agreement with the donor, can only be used for its designated purpose. An Unrestricted Fund can be used per the discretion of church management.

With the exception of the Carlene Merrill HR Fund, funds are not held in separate accounts or equities apart from other investments. The existence of such funds, along with donations, withdrawals, and remaining balances, are tracked only on this spreadsheet. Currently, all non-Carlene Merrill funds are considered to reside in the Burbank American and ETF account.

Unrestricted Funds

Fund Name	Purpose	Value 6/30/24	FY25 Donations	FY25 Withdrawals	Value 6/30/25
Parsonage	General	\$0.00			\$0.00
McFarlin Fund	General	\$145,150.45			\$145,150.45
General Fund	General	\$1,773,425.20	\$100.00	\$73,000.00	\$1,938,069.83
Totals:		\$1,918,575.65	\$100.00	\$73,000.00	\$2,083,220.28

Restricted Funds

Fund Name	Purpose	Value 6/30/24	FY25 Donations	FY25 Withdrawals	Value 6/30/25
Elizabeth Fiske Graham	Capital Expenditures	\$0.00			\$0.00
G.A. & B.H. Parkhurst	Repairs to Building	\$6,944.32			\$6,944.32
Helen Fiske	Choir Music	\$0.00			\$0.00
Flower Funds	Church & Grounds	\$0.00			\$0.00
Joan Kennedy	Music Program	\$185.00			\$185.00
Charity Funds	Needy Families	\$34,213.07		\$1,000.00	\$33,213.07
Carlene Merrill HR Fund	Human Resources	\$79,720.10	\$3,845.00		\$94,882.49
Totals:		\$121,062.49	\$3,845.00	\$1,000.00	\$135,224.88

Fund History

The General Fund includes Miscellaneous Bequests.

All dividends, interest, and capital gains are added to the General Fund except for the Carlene Merrill HR Fund

Flower Funds made up of:

	Init. Value	Year Establ.
Eustace Fiske Memorial Fund	\$325.00	1984
Bette Davis Memorial Fund	\$360.00	1991
Barbara A. Parkhurst Fund	\$500.00	1997
Helen Page Fund	\$5,000.00	2008

Charity Funds made up of:

	Init. Value	Year Establ.
Ethel P. Parker Fund	\$2,000.00	1962
William D. Phelps Fund	\$672.00	1967
Spaulding Memorial Fund	\$1,000.00	1945
First Grace Charity Funds	\$12,530.00	1995

Other restricted funds which were merged into the General Fund in 2004:

	Init. Value	Year Establ.	Purpose
Mabel P. Warren	\$500.00	1931	Grounds
Arthur H. Warren	\$200.00	1931	Music
Gregory Center	\$235.00	1973	Youth Work

Parish Minister Annual Report For 2024-2025

Overall, I am glad to say that our congregation is strong and healthy. Last year felt like we were finally fully back from COVID. People returned, new people, including new families, joined, and we re-engaged in programs within and beyond our congregation like we had pre-pandemic. I have loved the energy and enthusiasm as we have been able to look past just getting through the pandemic to imagining what we need to thrive in the future.

At the same time, we have faced some major changes and struggles within and beyond our walls. Our business manager and bookkeeper, Jeff Ellis, resigned in January. We hired Susan DeMinico as our new bookkeeper in the spring. She brings an enormous wealth of expertise and has been a real asset for our treasurer. She does work remotely, which means that we have had to ask Erica to take on office specific chores, such as scanning receipts. Christopher Grills, the music director, resigned his position in May and took medical leave for the last six weeks of the church year. I am grateful to Brian Snow, who stepped in several times to provide music during Christopher's absences before and during his medical leave. I appreciate the Senior Choir's patience and understanding as well. The music program, however, has really been impacted over the last year, as participation is down across all three choirs and we find ourselves in search again for a new director.

The other main challenge comes from outside our walls as our country is turning toward authoritarianism. We are watching our most vulnerable neighbors being targeted by Federal authorities and laws. It is a very frightening time. We are discerning a balance between living into our Unitarian Universalist faith and keeping our community safe. I think it will be a long time before we see the other side of this and that the work of repair could take generations. While we need to pay attention to what is happening on the national and global levels, we can only influence things locally. First Parish is even more important now as a community grounded in the practices of love, freedom, reason and courage. Thank you for your continued stewardship of our beloved community and our faith.

Here are some notes and highlights of my ministry over the year.

Worship

I led most of the regular worship services in partnership with Christopher and, for intergenerational services, with Dolores. We held our usual special services, including our Water and Flower Communion, the two Christmas Eve Candle Lighting services, Pancakes and Carols (in the vestry) and Tenebrae. Dolores and I also led two evening Advent services in December and Lenten evening service in the spring. Services were also led by our General Assembly Delegates, Dolores, the Welcoming Congregation Committee, the Stewardship Team, the Music Committee and Dr. Grills, the Green Committee (a UU Justice Climate Revival) and Neil Harmon. We had to cancel the February 9 service due to snow and held the February 16 service remotely, also due to weather.

Special Ceremonies and Rites of Passage

- September 29, 2024: Memorial Service for Mary Bliss at Concord Academy, Concord, MA
- October 4, 2024: Memorial Service for Dan Yauckoes at First Parish
- November 9, 2024: Wedding Service for Taylor Barnes and Samuel Spero at First Parish
- February 9, 2025: Wedding Service for Rachel Hearn and Cay Outerbridge at First Parish
- April 12, 2025: Memorial Service for Judith Raiguel at First Parish
- May 4, 2025: Membership Recognition Service at First Parish
 - ♦ **New Members:** Gwen Meins; Rachel Hearn; Cay Outerbridge; & Alan and Melissa Sloan.
 - ♦ **Five Years:** Amanda Salowsky; Barry Jefferson; Sue Jefferson; Rick Warner; & Garland Kemper.
 - ♦ **Ten Years:** Jackie Diamond & Nick Kaffine. ♦ **Twenty-Five Years:** Virginia Adams
- May 24, 2025: Memorial Service for Christine Wilson at First Parish
- June 8, 2025: Service of Child Dedication for Owen and Max Rawding; Laura Sloan; and Gemma, Zoey and Jackson Forestaire.

Church Committee Meetings

I regularly attended meetings of the Standing Committee, Human Resources Subcommittee, the Committee on Ministry, the Worship Committee and the Pastoral Care and Service Team. I attended the New England Regional UUA joint board retreat in September with the Standing Committee. I also met regularly with John Schneider, our Standing Committee chair. In the spring, I met with the Music Director Search Team.

Staff

The staff met weekly from September through June. I also met weekly one on one with Christopher Grills and with Erica Clifford. I met with Jeff Ellis and Dolores Heredia-wood as needed.

Faith Formation: I led a four-week online Advent retreat. Dolores and I led an in-person Women's Christmas/Epiphany retreat and a Lenten Book Group.

Pastoral Work

I am grateful to the Pastoral Care and Service Team: Liz Peterson, Brian Snow, Kathy Deschenes, Linda Newhard, Maura Snow, Sandy Johnston, Frans Janssen, Cheryl Wilson, Tom Coffey and Erin Clifford. I also thank all the knitters and crocheters and blessers who have made our prayer shawl ministry a gift of comfort to so many within and beyond our congregation.

Sandy Johnston and Linda Newhard kept folks connected with cards. Kathy Deschenes and Erin Clifford led Healing Conversations twice a month online. Maura Snow held regular "Zoom Cafés" to help keep folks connected and the whole team made sure to set up a table at social hour for parishioners to send cards to those in need of a kind word. Liz Peterson stepped off the team at the end of this last church year. I am grateful for her many years of service.

Social Outreach and Public Witness

I continued to participate in "Can We Talk" at the New Bethel AME Church in Lowell as it went through several transitions. Rev. Sharel Roberson retired from New Bethel and our team worked the CWT staff to visit new sites, including THRIVE and Eliot Presbyterian. As none of these sites were suitable, the program went on hiatus for the summer.

Denominational and Interfaith Connections

I regularly attended the twice monthly meetings of the Chelmsford Clergy Group and met monthly with a group of UU colleagues. I continued mentoring a student minister at the request of the UUMA. I attended the New England Regional UUMA retreat in May 2025 and led the opening worship with Carolyn Patierno and Elea Kemler.

Professional Development

I continued my monthly clergy coaching work with Larry Peers. I took Susan Beaumont's course of staffing and supervision for a second time as a refresher. I attended a reunion retreat with my Center for Courage and Renewal group as well as a workshop retreat with Carrie Newcomer, both at St. Mary's Center in Sewanee, TN.

Special thanks to my Committee on Ministry: Leslie Yauckoes, Kathy Deschenes, Liz Peterson, Deb Grad and Gail Burati for organizing a special social hour to honor the 25th anniversary of my ordination in June of 2025.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of all our lay-leaders, in public and behind-the-scenes. I would like to express special appreciation to those stepping down from elected leadership, including Standing Committee members Rose Lerer, Doug Aker and Rick Warner; Nominating Committee members Susan Woodmansee and Jeanette Moreau; Board of Investment member Nancy Kaelin. I thank John Schneider for serving as chair of the Standing Committee, Dave Kaffine as Treasurer and Carla Corey for serving as our collector. I would like to thank Ryan and

Stephanie Owen for leading a successful and energetic canvass pledge drive. And I would like to thank those who led our other fundraisers, including the Donut Sales and the Auction.

Twenty-three years in, I am grateful for the privilege of serving as minister of this congregation. You are caring, committed, open, generous, hospitable, and gracious, to name just a few of your wonderful qualities. I love that you share your lives, your gifts, your stories, your families and your trust with me and with one another, embodying our covenants. The gifts of time, of talent, and of treasure you each share give this congregation its vitality, its joyfulness, its sense of purpose and commitment, and give life and expression to our shared Unitarian Universalist faith. I take great joy in our walk together, bearing witness to our faith through offering our sanctuary, our service and our worship. We continue to live in a time of deep divisions and fear in our country and I fear that it will only get harder as we are in some very turbulent and dangerous times. But I trust that as we come together to discern faithfully how to live in the world, we will find our way through. You give me hope and courage.

In faith,
The Reverend Ellen Rowse Spero

Annual Report of the Lifespan Faith Formation Director, 2024-2025

The year's theme was Engage, Connection, Belonging.

Kimberly Debus, author of Hold My Chalice Articles on June 26, 2024, spoke about James Baldwin's 1964 essay "Nothing Personal." Even if this essay was written in the milieu of the Civil Rights movement, it's underlying truths about the need to engage, connect, and belong, are the cornerstones of the momentum, despite societal upheavals, bringing forth the communal wellspring of the 2024-2025 Lifespan Faith Formation Program. She writes, "It is a long, beautiful essay, reflecting on what is happening in 'the unloved streets' and the sense of despair and isolation in the world. It's an essay very much worth reading; toward the end, he writes:

*"One discovers the light in darkness, that is what darkness is for;
but everything in our lives depends on how we bear the light. It is necessary,
while in darkness, to know that there is a light somewhere, to know that in oneself,
waiting to be found, there is a light. What the light reveals is danger,
and what it demands is faith.*

*...
The moment we cease to hold each other, the moment we break faith with one another,
the sea engulfs us and the light goes out." -James Baldwin*

I want to express my gratitude to everyone at First Parish, individual, families and congregational life, including staff for offering opportunities to the Lifespan Faith Formation program to flourish. It was a busy and exciting year that offered many opportunities throughout the program and congregational life to honour what we have, and envision a wonder-full future

As new societal norms emerge the reality of new religious trends and nationalistic forces invite us to adjust and adapt. It is hopeful to see reemerging volunteers, and even with the given "REFF" consistencies and inconsistencies, the programs did thrive. The Adult programs thrived as new ideas gained strength and stepping stone gatherings opened the path for discerning what is best for the community. The youth program gently grows with new and long-standing strong and very dedicated families. The absence of High School Youth Group remains disheartening. However, along with Young Adults, we see more join us along with those that families have been here awhile. We are blessed they all are gracing our community in all areas.

We are a blessed community. They/we/us are in a community where mind, body and spirit, have been nurtured, nourished and strengthened through our willingness to connect and engage and belong to First Parish and Unitarian Universalist of Chelmsford.

I am so grateful to have been part of this wonderful congregation another year. Thank you!

Respectfully Submitted,

Gratefully,

Dolores GHeredia-Wood

Lifespan Faith Formation Director; dre@uuchelmsford.org

This report has the following sections:

1. Lifespan Faith Formation Programming
 - a. Lifespan Faith Formation & Membership-Hospitality Committee
2. Worship and Chapel
3. Sunday "RE" Faith Formation Programs
4. Lifespan Faith Formation/"RE"FF Council
5. Administrative/Committees

1. Lifespan Faith Formation Programming

Lifespan Faith Formation encompasses many areas in order to coordinate and collaborate as part of Faith Formation.

Small Group Ministry:

FPCC Small Groups offer the gift of connection with others and YoUU. I was asked to oversee per Carlene Merrill request and Rev. Ellen's approval. Goal for SGM to maintain an open door policy for new attendees as Small Groups with a variety of interests.

- Follow up of established SGM:
 - Ann Marie Sigdestad SGM continues.
 - Tom Coffey; 2 small groups; Men's Connection SGM. And Elder Men
- Monthly Small Groups
 - UU Family Jam Band, led by Brian Snow
 - Sacred Circle, Co-led Wendy Gillespie and Amanda Salowsky
 - 70's, 80's, Beyond and Retirees; Co-led, LFFD Oversee
 - REFF Family Group
- Additional Gatherings/Events:
 - "Everyone" Evening (Evensong) Dinner/Potluck Services: First Sundays Monthly
 - Advent Evening Services in December including 'Holiday Fair Open House' Joy
 - Rev. Ellen in Women's Epiphany gathering on January 4th; 30+Participants
 - Special Guest 'OTHA DAY' Drum Circle
 - Coordinated Talent Show

Young Adults:

- Coordinated Monthly in-person meetings; 3 to 9 participants, and not always the same attendees. Partially co-led by Henry Spero, LFFA.
 - Observation of Young Adults including "new" young adults integrated in all other areas of the church/committees, which is one of the basic intentions of this group.

1a. Lifespan Faith Formation & Membership-Hospitality Committee

Membership-Hospitality Committee co-led by: Carla Corey; Frans Janssen; Amanda MacLean; Elaine Mahoney; Chris Sweetnam; Rose Lerer, Dolores LFFD (oversee committee on their behalf).

- New Members: Gwen Meins, Rachel Hearn, Cay Outerbridge, Melissa Sloan, Alan Sloan, Kathy Talbot; Returning Member: Teri Heard-Ralbovsky
- NEW UU Course/Retreat: Organized and co-facilitated with Elaine Mahoney. Five participants: Rachel Hearn; Cay Outbridge; Alan Sloan and Melissa Sloan; Heidi Whitehair
- Membership Recognition Service May 4th, Recognized for time, treasure, talent and love.
 - Five Years: Amanda Salowsky; Barry Jefferson; Sue Jefferson Rick Warner; Garland Kemper
 - Ten Years: Jackie Diamond and Nick Kaffine
 - Twenty-Five Years: Virginia Adams
- In addition:
 - Annual Welcome! Potluck/Fall; Winter Holiday/December Pizza Meet and Greet; Spring Newcomers Meet & Greet; Two FPCC Tours
 - Committee participated on UUA Online Course: Tending Congregational Life
 - Purchased from committee budget four bar tables during social hour
 - Committee participated on UUA Online Course: Tending Congregational Life
 - Circle Dinner Series during Summer Months

- LFFD, oversee committee on their behalf, meetings and kept records in Google Doc format in conjunction with Breeze database, posting announcements on church entrance monitor and weekly, monthly media. Co-led and coordinated New UU. Also coordinated/ Membership Recognition Service. All administrative including submitting budget; communication forms and contacting.
- Greeters/Breeze Sign Ups. LFFD coordinated greeters/sign-up; Bonnie Rankin; Ami Hughes; Rick Warner; Nancy Kaelin; Caroline Snow; Rose Lerer, Sue Yates-Scott were the greeters throughout the year.

2. Worship and Chapel

- Worship Services: Collaborated or Led with Rev. Ellen Spero-Rowse, Dr. Grills, Music Director, and Committees on monthly Interger Services. Including For All Ages Storytelling and Embodied Worship. E.g.: Thanksgiving; Advent Evening Service; Solstice; Justice; Love Interger; Green Committee; Mother's Day; LFF/REFF Appreciation Sunday; Flower Communion
- Co-Coordinated: Ingathering Service Collection/Delivery to Food Pantry
- Chapel Sundays Monthly followed REFF UU Themes and Soul Matters Themes – Refer to REFF#4

3. "RE" Faith Formation Programs: Pre-K through High School

Attendance on Sunday mornings about 6 to 10 children/youth joining weekly. REFF families children: Rawding, Woodmansee, Graham, Worthen-Johnston, Moore, Volk, Meehan, Sloan, and Owen, Forestier. On occasion guests or grandchildren of members attended. There were sprinkles of youth participation in other events generally.

2024-25 REFF Curriculum: "All About Me" (by learning all about yoUU)

- "RE"FF UU Monthly themes integrated with Soul Matters Curriculum.
 - K to 12th: One Room Chapel
 - Field Trips to Bruce Freeman Train Bike Trail
 - High School Room no participants (occasional special church events)
- Events E.g.: Halloween Parade/Trick-or-Treating in graveyard; Friendsgiving Potluck; Holiday Party; Holiday Pageant for Christmas Eve Early Service, What the UU Dickens; Seder/Last Supper; Ice Cream Social; Chocolate Bunny Ritual; Egg Hunt; Movie Day; Field Day
- Participation in Worship
 - FPCC Covenant Reading, Chalice lighting; Call to Worship, All components of LFF/REFF Service
- Special/Social Justice Projects:
 - Backpacks Collection for Immigrant Children/Families; Mitten Tree; Ice Cream Social

The High School Youth:

- Specific participation: Liam (Artemis) W-J, as Nursery Staff
- Coming of Age (COA): We did not offer the program this year. Next time: 2026-2027
- Our Whole Lives (OWL): We did not offer the program this year. Next time: 2025-2026

REFF/FPCC Child Dedication:

- June 8th, 2025:
- Laura Sloan
- Gemma, Zoey, and Jackson Foresteire
- Owen and Maxwell Rawding

4. Lifespan Faith Formation/"RE"FF Council

Members: Molly Rawding, Susan Woodmansee, Laura Nutter, and Rosemary MacMullin
RE Council monthly meetings and dedication throughout the year volunteering for weekly and field trips. Also, co-coordinated and led in collaboration with LFFA, Christmas Eve Pageant, Ice Cream Social in February and other REFF events. LFFD, maintained communication with LFFD, and families. Personal note: I am very grateful to the RECouncil and Henry Spero, LFFA that I was able to take Christmas Eve off for the first time since 2012. Noche Buena is my traditional cultural celebration. Their support and dedication to the REFF program as volunteers and to the First Parish of Chelmsford Community are inspirational and amazing Role Models.

LFF/REFF Council FYI Note:

- Jan-2022; RECouncil unanimously voted on merging LFF and REFF; for the purpose of budget and support with promotion/ideas and continuity of programs and FPCC Religious Education Charter update.
- Feb 2022. Standing Committee Approved official merger of programs LFF and REFF.

5. Administrative/Committees

Administration:

Staff Meeting; RECouncil; Standing Committee

- Coordinate communication about gatherings, and the gatherings
- Updated and Maintained Communication/Announcements: bulletin boards; social media; Misc. Admin
- LFF Website; Yodek (downstairs entry screen weekly)
- Spirit of Life Team Meetings/Events attended/supported when possible
- Safety Committee Meetings
- Trained two great Lifespan Faith Formation Assistants, unfortunately their outstanding contribution to the program was limited. Ashanti Wilson-Moreau; Henry Spero

Nursery:

- Hiring protocols/training. Including assisting with set-up/breakdown of REFF Sunday Mornings.
- Staff: Rosemary McMullin; Liam (Artemis) WJ;
- Please note there was not regular attendance in Nursery Room parents preferred to stay with children in Nursery Room Nursery Caregivers Assist with One Room Chapel on Sundays.

Professional Development:

- Multiple Miscellaneous. Transitional UUA Workshops and online information

Office Assistant and Building/Events Coordinator Annual Report, '24-25

This past year felt very eventful and yet at the same time, “same old, same old” – and I am still undecided if that’s a good or bad thing!

Much like last year, we saw very few new renters, though the Building saw continued typical use by our known/steady long term renters. Use by the church/congregation continued to uptick, however, with scheduling becoming a bit of a challenge at times as the calendar filled up with committee, worship, and community events. I acted as Sexton for several memorial services for church members or their loved ones in October 2024, April 2025, and May 2025. As somber as it is to fulfill that role, I am also honored that I can help make a difficult day a bit easier. There are happy days too, though! I had the great joy of assisting with the wedding of Rev. Ellen’s son, Sam, and his partner Taylor in November 2024.

The New Year brought some changes in staffing as Jeff, the church Business Manager, parted ways with First Parish in January. Later in the Spring, Dr. Grills also resigned, and the church hired a new bookkeeper who works remotely. All of these changes brought some new tasks for me in office, as did the formation of the new Safety Committee in April that I am a part of as a staff member. Amidst all of that, I continued refining the process of producing the announcements, newsletter, orders of worship, etc. and addressing the weekly and monthly needs of the church. Unfortunately, longer term projects continued to be left on the backburner as my hours were used for more urgent/time sensitive matters.

Recognizing this, and that my plate was starting to fill up more and more, and there were gaps and other aid needed that volunteers and other staff could not address, sparked conversation with Rev. Ellen and the Standing Committee about expanding the hours of the Office position, and I am pleased to say that I will be “full time” for the 2025-2026 church year. I am grateful that I can serve the church in this way, and that First Parish serves and supports me right back.

I am looking forward to the next year here, and what further changes it may bring. Thank you all!

Submitted respectfully and with gratitude,
Erica Clifford
Office Assistant and Building/Events Coordinator

Building Report Year Ending June 2025

July 2024

1. Did monthly inspections (Fire extinguisher, first aid, AED, elevator phone checks, and drained drip tank).
2. Did quarterly testing of emergency lights.
3. Installed boards along the fence to keep the wood chips inside the fence.
4. Had Vestry floor refinished.
5. Annual smoke detector & sprinkler testing.
6. Rescued bird trapped in the balcony stairs.
7. Met with the Mass Save inspector.

August

1. Did monthly inspections.

September

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Had insulation installed in attics/crawl space.
3. Annual fire extinguisher inspection by licensed inspector.
4. Got an estimate for repairing the portico roof that is leaking into the vestry hallway window.
5. Got estimate to fix sagging ceiling in vestry.
6. Removed A/C units from the parlor and Wight Room.

October

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Had water leak over the vestry door & window repaired.
3. Repaired clock bell link.
4. Annual State elevator inspection.
5. Met with National Grid inspector.
6. Replaced battery in sanctuary clock.
7. Met with prospective fire alarm companies.
8. Had the boiler serviced by Plumber.
9. Had portico roof repaired & had new insulation installed in the attics and the crawl spaces.

November

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Meet with the plumber to do exhaust testing for state inspection.
3. Meet with the new IT person.
4. Changed the sanctuary clock back to Standard Time.

December

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Lowered chandeliers and changed bulbs.

January 2025

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Meet with the State inspector to do exhaust testing for state inspection.

February

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Meet with the Fire alarm company to replace heat detectors - incomplete.
3. Meet with plumber to get an estimate to fix the heat issue on the second floor.
4. Replaced faulty emergency light.
5. Replaced AED adult pads.

March

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Met with the Fire alarm company to replace heat detectors - finalized.
3. Met with Carpenter to get an estimate to replace the siding with Hardie plank.
4. Met with Window Woman of New England regarding sanctuary widows.
5. Kitchen exhaust hood annual inspection.
6. Searched for new astragal.
7. Met with the water department for annual backflow test on the domestic water.

April

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Repaired the chapel doors.
3. Repaired a drawer in the kitchen
4. Met with the Safety committee and the police department for safety analysis.
5. Met with contractor for estimate of siding of community building.
6. Met with Fire alarm company to install last heat detector in crawl space.
7. Replaced sanctuary clock mechanism.
8. Met with painting contractors to get quotes on painting the vestry.

May

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Went to the Historic District meeting to discuss Solar and re-siding the building.
3. Fire drills for the nursery school using fire alarm.

June

1. Did monthly inspections.
2. Filed application with the Historic District meeting to re-siding the building.
3. Ordered dish washer soap.
4. Installed Air containers in Parlor & Wight Room.
5. Cleaned HVAC systems in chapel and offices.
6. Met with town building inspector for our annual building inspection.
7. Contacted Historic District regarding replacing the siding.

Council in Faith in Action Ministries (CFAM) Annual Report 2024 – 2025

The Council in Faith in Action Ministries (CFAM) embraced a "small but mighty" mentality for this year. Below are highlights of the two main programs that CFAM supports.

Share-the-Plate Appreciation!

We are pleased to report that our congregation has donated a total of \$2,408.55 to our five recipients for this year: UUA Disaster Relief Fund, World Central Kitchen, Pink Haven, Mill City Grows, Merrimack Valley Food Bank. This does not include any donations folks made directly to these organizations online.

Thank you so much for your generosity. Acknowledgment letters from the recipients can be found on the bulletin board in the vestry.

General Assembly

CFAM supported the congregation in all the pieces that were brought up within the framework of the General Assembly. The main item we focused on was education around Article 2 or the bylaws that include the principles. We had many great conversations around this change. Carla Corey graciously attended General Assembly as a delegate.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Snow and Joan Coyne, Chairs.

Green Committee Annual Report 2024 – 2025

This year, your Green Committee has made meaningful progress on several environmental and community initiatives:

- We hosted an invigorating Climate Justice Revival workshop and worship service in April, along with an Earth Day Fair during social hour, engaging our congregation in climate action and education, along with our share-the-plate partner, Mill City Grows.
- We screened two film series, "The Week" and the UUA's "Climate at the Intersections", which sparked thoughtful discussions and deepened awareness around climate justice, the facts of climate change, and interconnected issues.
- We coordinated tours of the Black Earth Composting operations in Groton, as well as the Nuclear Power Plant at UMass Lowell.
- We successfully transitioned the church to power down electronics during the week when not in use for worship services, reducing our energy consumption.
- Our team hosted a table at the town's Holiday Prelude, and volunteered at the Chelmsford Fall festival, offering outreach and visibility within the wider community.
- A recycling bin has been added to social hour, complementing the existing compost bin and supporting our commitment to responsible waste practices.
- We continue to investigate the church's heating system, which currently only regulates the first floor, and are also exploring the feasibility of adding solar panels with battery backup storage to further our sustainability goals.
- Following the UUA's Green Sanctuary 2030 program, we will continue to engage our workshop participants, the congregation, and community partners in assessing opportunities for collective climate justice actions in the upcoming year.

We are grateful for the support of the congregation and look forward to continuing our work in the year to come! **Members:** Christina Cervantes (Chair), Diana Keohane (Secretary), Rebecca Gore, Nancy Kaelin, Amanda MacLean, Diane Morris

Grounds Annual Report 2024 – 2025

Another cold Spring greeted the Stewards of First Parish.

On Lawn Maintenance this season - Bob Morse, Paul Buckley, Tip Rawding, Andrew Worthen and Fin.

Our Adopt a Plot Gardening Team - Deb Grad, Kathy Talbot, Leslie Yauckoes, Diana Keohane, Molly Rawding and family, Nancy Kaelin and Martha Sherburne.

Pruning - Paul Buckley, Martha Sherburne, Tip Rawding.

Fertilizing - Martha Sherburne.

Edging - Leslie Yauckoes, 2 Dogwood Trees.

Late Spring started, our team's arose to the tasks at hand and quickly got us on track of caring for the grounds.

Each year our Annual Mulch Event is a task that stabilizes the maintenance of our plots. Stewards and volunteers placed 3/4 of 8 yards of mulch on the plots by the days allotted time slot. Pizza and salad was provided. The 90 degrees and increasing temperatures came for the heat of late Spring. The last 1/4 of mulch was placed on its plot 3 weeks later.

Justine's ninebark that had been left for pruning from the end of last year, was caught up on its haircut. I left them to bloom in all their glory. A wedding came upon us in June. Erica emailed and stated the wedding party had a request. Would it be possible to trim the ninebarks before the wedding?

Hmmm, I just trimmed them in early Spring. I'll come on by and take a look. WHOA! Rang across the church yard. Stunned by the optimum growth that had continued and was still going! I immediately started the necessary pruning. The second shrub was finished on the day of the wedding before 5pm. Paul, Tip, Molly and the boys spruced the grass, Japanese Holly, Crabapple Tree, Forsythia Shrub and worked in her plot. I saw Erica and said we won't be trimming Justine's nine barks for the rest of the season. They have been pruned their 20% for the year.

I thought it special to share that a wren raised her family in Justine's ninebark this Spring.

Now that the 90 and above temperatures have subsided, we can start up our work on our sunnier plots again.

The Fringe Tree received its new look to keep Lilly of the Valley under control.

Work to be done:

- Pruning.
- Fertilizing back on track.
- Japanese Maple Tree circles; need to remove excess vegetation.

These projects may continue into next year. Both teams would love to have more members.

We welcome anyone interested in being a Good Steward of the Earth and Our Church to join us. It is a Wonderful Space for Spirituality, Friendship, Fun and Making Nature Grow! We really do have lots of fun!

Please Contact Martha Orr Sherburne, Chair: Prairie7dog7@gmail.com

Membership-Hospitality Committee Annual Report 2024-2025

Committee monthly meetings 2nd Wednesdays..

Membership-Hospitality Committee: Co-Chaired by: Carla Corey; Frans Janssen.

Members: Amanda MacLean; Elaine Mahoney; Chris Sweetnam, Rose Lerer, FPCC Clerk; Dolores, LFFD (oversee committee on their behalf)

- Church life was vital this year compared to the last couple years after the Covid Pandemic. Societal uncertainties seem to have created an opportunity for more interested individuals and families who are exploring and seeking a community that shares UU Values. The committee as a whole made great efforts and strides to make sure these seekers felt welcomed and informed at First Parish. It strives to follow and fulfill the guidelines of the Committee's Charter throughout the year in addition to reaching and greeting newcomers, friends and guests during social hour and beyond.
- The committee hosted the Annual Welcome! Potluck/Fall; Winter Holiday/December Pizza Meet and Greet; Spring Newcomers Meet & Greet; Two FPCC Tours during the year led by Bonnie Rankin.
- New UU Course: March 29th. Co-lead Elaine Mahoney, and Dolores, LFFD. Held as a one-day retreat, feedback pleasant and successful. Luncheon offered during retreat well represented by church committee members: FP Treasurer, Standing Committee, Bells: David Kaffine Social-Hour Overseer/Collector: Carla Corey; CFAM: UU Caroline Snow WCC: UU Frances Killam; Music Committee: Beth Benoit; Green Committee: Diana Keohane Pastoral Care/Worship: Brian Snow
- New UU Participants:
 - Rachel Hearn
 - Cay Outbridge
 - Alan Sloan
 - Melissa Sloan
 - Heidi Whitehair
- New Members: Gwen Meins, Rachel Hearn, Cay Outerbridge, Melissa Sloan, Alan Sloan Kathy Talbot Returning Member: Teri Heard-Ralbovsky
- Intergenerational Membership Service May 4th. Recognized for time, treasure, talent & Love;
 - Five Years: Amanda Salowsky; Barry Jefferson; Sue Jefferson; Rick Warner Garland Kemper
 - Ten Years: Jackie Diamond and Nick Kaffine
 - Twenty-Five Years: Virginia Adams
- In addition:
 - Committee participated on UUA Online Course: Tending Congregational Life
 - Chris Sweetnam suggested two bar tables during social hour. The committee purchased two; since they have been very well received by the congregation, the committee invested in two more.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gratefully, Dolores GHeredia-Wood

Lifespan Faith Formation Director; *on behalf of Membership-Hospitality Committee*

Music Committee Annual Report 2025

The Music Committee's role is to support First Parish's music program. Primarily that means supporting and being a sounding board for our Music Director and making sure there are funds to care for the instruments (piano, organ, handbells), purchase music, pay for streaming rights for worship services, pay for membership in the Hand Bell society, and pay soloists and substitutes.

This has been a mostly quiet year for the Music Committee. We found a new home for the 8+ boxes of music we purged from the Choral file cabinets last year – a choral director several of us know from UMass Lowell was willing to take all of it!

Some members of the Music Committee participated in the beta test of the new UUA hymnal. No one was blown away by the beta test (ease of use OR the content), but we recognize that this will be a useful subscription for us. The UUA plans to make this available in June. If they do, it may be a good resource for our lay leaders for summer services.

Cindy Gist has re-arranged the music in the file cabinets to make it easier to find and re-file the music going forward. Her persistent work to keep the music library in order is appreciated. We are looking for one more file cabinet, as more music will be purchased over time. Kim Gist has done an amazing job with our online database of choral music.

The Music Committee publicized that the old Red and Blue hymnals were available for anyone who wanted them. Several former church members heard the news and came to pick up copies. There are still a lot of these hymnals, and the Music Committee will decide how to dispose of them.

The Music Committee also wants to express our appreciation for ALL the choirs (Bell, Youth, and Senior) and instrumentalists whose performances enhanced our worship services during the past year. A piece that lasts a few minutes during worship requires many hours of rehearsal in advance – thank you for all your work.

We wish Dr. Christopher Grills all the best as he leaves First Parish Chelmsford to focus on growing his teaching business. He will be missed!

Membership on the Music Committee is open to anyone interested in current or future music programs. New ideas are always welcome. We only meet when we have agenda items, so only a few times over the church year. Our purpose is to support the Music Director but also to be a conduit for congregation input. Please feel free to contact any of the committee members: Beth Benoit, Lisa Calvo, Cindy Gist, Barry Jefferson, Alicia Page, Brian Snow, Maura Snow, Henry Tervo, or Janice Tervo.!

Pastoral Care and Service Team Annual Report 2025

This year we continued to host a table at social hour to create a presence and to also provide cards for folks who would like to send greetings, condolences, or best wishes to fellow congregants. The table also gives us a place to be more visible to folks who may want to check in or have a chat.

We put up a bulletin board in the vestry with pictures of the team and our contact info in case anyone has a need that arises and wonders who to speak with.

Maura Snow continued to host a monthly First Friday Zoom Cafe at lunchtime for anyone who would like to connect. This has been helpful for those who can't make it to church physically but want to retain their connection to fellow First Parishers.

Erin Clifford and Kathy Deschenes continued to host Healing Conversations twice a month for those who are dealing with grief of all kinds including the state of the country.

Sandy Johnston and Linda Newhard continued to send cards to parishioners who need some support or are celebrating life events such as milestone birthdays, new homes, and welcoming new family members.

The prayer shawl ministry has had its struggles but continues on. We want to thank all the knitters in the church who give so much of their time and talent to comfort those in need whether they are church members or not.

We kept in touch regularly with those who cannot make it to church by making phone calls and visiting, all in support of Ellen's pastoral care ministry.

This church year Maura Snow spent 20 minutes before our PC&ST meetings to help us all—both individually and as a team—to discern our gifts and our focus as a committee. These sessions will continue into the new church year. We are all so very thankful for Maura's expertise in this area..

Respectfully submitted,

The Pastoral Care and Service Team

Sandy Johnston, Cheryl Wilson, Frans Janssen, Brian Snow, Maura Snow, Liz Peterson, Erin Clifford, Linda Newhard, Tom Coffey, and Kathy Deschenes (chair)

FY25 Report of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is First Parish's governing board. Its governance ministry includes providing direction and stewardship for our fiscal affairs, our building, our staff, our safety and security, our external relations, and other related matters brought to our attention. John Schneider served as the board chair in FY25 and the other members of the Standing Committee included Doug Aker, Gail Burati, Tom Coffey, Ron Deschenes, Rebecca Gore, Dave Kaffine (treasurer), Rose Lerer (clerk), and Rick Warner. Rev. Ellen Spero serves as an ex officio (nonvoting) member of the Committee. Dolores Heredia Wood, Lifespan Faith Formation and Youth Programs Director, frequently attended the meetings as well.

In addition to managing our fiscal affairs for both operating and long term expenses, (and many thanks to our treasurer Dave Kaffine for the amount of time and effort he commits to keep our budget on track), we reinstituted the practice of organizing leadership "summit" meetings to coordinate fiscal and budgetary management and develop a schedule of events for FY26. The summit meetings provide an excellent opportunity for committee chairs and others interested in helping in the strategic planning process to come together, talk, share ideas, coordinate, and recommendations for future action.

Another major accomplishment in FY25 was adopting the recommendations made by the Spirit of Life team for congregation renewal and advancement. The Standing Committee voted to approve the two recommendations of the SOL team:

- Adopt common sense "reforms" to improve leadership, organization and financing at First Parish¹; and,
- Launch the Building Bridges Project to improve external and internal communication & outreach.

More will be shared about these goals during FY26 including ways you can get involved.

The Standing Committee also worked closely with Rev. Spero and our Human Resources committee to address several staffing issues ensuring that the confidentiality of the proceedings and dignity of all involved was maintained.

Finally, much appreciation to Rose Lerer, Rick Warner, and Doug Aker for completing their terms. As our clerk, Rose drafted and recorded meeting minutes, warrants, and kept track of our votes. Rick served as our liaison on matters pertaining to the building and our relationship with our main tenant, Little Acorn Preschool. And Doug represented the Standing Committee on matters relating to our annual canvass. They will be missed at our monthly meetings.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
John R. Schneider

¹A good example of a common sense reform is the Carlene Merrill Fund and our campaign to raise additional money for the fund.

Website/Publicity 2024-2025 Annual Report

Publicity

We did not do any publicity this year.

Website

It was a quiet year for the Website. There were no major changes, or upgrades.

Our committee is still updating the weekly Worship Schedule, the monthly Soul Matters and Share the Plate. We share updating the Calendar and upcoming events with Erica and Dolores. Dolores updates the LFF pages.

We continue to post weekly sermons.

Over the summer we explored the possibility of moving the Wordpress hosting to DreamPress hosting. This would be the same company that we currently use, but the servers would be managed by Dreamhost (our hosting company) rather than by the webteam. We think this would be a more secure option, since we would no longer be responsible for the security of our servers. Dreamhost would also provide some support if there was a problem with the site, so staff could contact Dreamhost directly during the day, rather than waiting for volunteers to get home from work. It would also mean the the webteam would not require as much technical knowledge in the future.

Google Workspace

We successfully switched all the committees over to Google Meet from Zoom

There is still work to do to create spaces to post documents that should be available to members, and to make them easy to find. Items like Standing Committee minutes, reimbursement forms, Faith in Action forms, the Warrant for congregation meetings. Erica and I created a policy for that and presented it to the Standing Committee in the fall, but things came up and it never got voted on later in the year.

As chair, I would like to thank my committee for all the work they did this year. Members: Eliot Mayer, Barry Jefferson and Sue Jefferson (website) and Dee Halzack (publicity).

I'd also like to thank Dave Kaffine, who handles all the sermon posting both audio and video recordings. He's not a member of this committee, but he does all that work for us, and manages all those pages.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Coyne
Chair

Welcoming Congregation Committee Annual Report 2025

The Welcoming Congregation has continued to be active. We have continued our relationship with the Chelmsford DEI committee. Warren is our DEIC liaison and occasionally attends their meetings.

We collaborated with the DEIC on the Transgender Day of Remembrance and the Transgender Day of Visibility Town Hall, both of which were at the CCA, a venue provided by the DEIC. Both events were well attended. We will continue to work with the DEI.

We were approached by the Chelmsford Cultural Council and encouraged to apply for grants to fund future LGBTQ+ educational programming. We are looking into opportunities to collaborate with them.

This year's TDOV Town Hall theme was We are Family, We are Neighbors, We are Friends. We intended to show the community that transgender individuals are already a part of our various communities, whether we have realized it or not: they are our family, friends, and neighbors. We had a panel discussion in which our panelists shared their personal stories and then answered questions. Our panelists consisted of two moms of adult trans children, our own Frances Killam and Gwen Meins, and two older adult Transgender individuals from the Chelmsford Community, Marla Wallace and Mike Brown. TDOV was well-attended this year, perhaps because of the political climate at the time of the event. We received a lot of positive feedback.

We had a TDOV church service with Frances and Gwen as featured speakers. Our music director, Christopher Grills, invited a Transgender Composer and pianist to perform her original piece during the service. Queer Canadian Stuart Beach originally composed our anthem on commission for the Queer Choir in Ottawa, and graciously permitted us to use it for our TDOV service.

Additionally, we continue establishing relationships with the Welcoming Teams of Welcoming Religious Denominations in Chelmsford (Including Congregation Shalom, Trinity Lutheran, Aldersgate Methodist, The Congregational Church, and the Episcopal Church). We have all agreed we would like to collaborate more on events in the future.

Recently, our committee joined with the Stow/Acton UU Church in support of their Pink Haven initiative under the coordination leadership of Kathy Haberle. Our TDOV service split the plate fundraiser went to support Pink Haven.

We tabled in the Vestry and participated in events on the Town Common (weather permitting). We participated in Chelmsford Pride, hosting a table with stickers and informational resources. Frances did face painting. Frances also offered face painting at Lowell Pride. Warren attended Boston Pride.

Deirdre continues to post on our Facebook page and in our group to honor the special dates in the LGBTQ+ communities. We look for various ways to mark those dates. Dee and others post about news from and by the LGBTQIA+ community, good or bad. We have shared news about legislative developments. We welcome sharing from others. Our posts in support of the LGBTQIA+ community have been well-received. The Facebook posts are a way to reach out beyond the church.

The Committee continues to support the LGBTQ+ community by observing important dates, advocating on issues, and educating the congregation. We are always looking for new ways to do so. We welcome suggestions and new members who want to help us in that mission.

Our meetings are usually held on the third Sunday of the month, at 1pm, on Google Meet, with occasional changes because of holiday weekends. We occasionally meet in person after church. If you'd like more info or to check us out, email welcoming@uuchelmsford.org, or see us during Social Hour.

Respectfully submitted, Dee Halzack (co-chair); Deirdre Heck (co-chair)
Gwen Meins; Warren Flewellen; Frances Killam; Abbie Ransdell; and Kedar Thomas

Annual Report of the Worship Committee 2024-2025

This year, in addition to the chalice lighters, we started having members of the worship team schedule readers and covenant readers ahead of time on the Worship schedule. This would let Ellen know who was doing what, and let us avoid the mid-week call for readers (or chalice lighters). Two readers and a covenant reader were scheduled most weeks. If they weren't needed, Rev. Ellen would let them know that week. This also allowed us to schedule Christmas Eve and Tenebrae service readers early on too, so that we had that all set. This seemed to work well, and allowed us to give a variety of people a chance to participate in the worship service.

Online Hymnal

In the fall we signed up to be a part of the UUA's online hymnal beta test. This gave us access to an early version of the Hymnal. We and the Music committee were able to try out the Hymnal and give feedback to the UUA about our experience with it. We also used the online hymnal in a service to introduce the congregation to the new hymnal.

Worship Tech Summit

We held a Worship Summit in January with the Worship Tech Team, Chat Hosts, Online Social Hour Team, and the Web Team to check in with those teams about online worship, Sunday morning issues, and anything they wanted to bring up. The two topics that were discussed were Sanctuary safety on Sunday morning and the changing requirements of AV needs in the sanctuary due to the new online hymnal.

For the safety issues, the newly reformed Safety team will talk about new training sessions that may be needed.

For the sanctuary AV equipment, we decided we needed more information about what options were available before we made any decisions. We decided to have a group do some research on our options over the summer.

Music

Our Music Director stepped down before the end of the year, but we were lucky enough to have Brian Snow step in and handle providing music for service. He had help from many other members of the congregation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joan Coyne, Chair

Members: Aggie Brennan, Neil Harmon, Brian Snow, and Rick Warner