

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church Scituate, MA

established 1634

2024 Annual Report presented to the Annual Meeting

June 9, 2024



Our Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law.

This is our great covenant:

to dwell together in peace,
to cherish the living earth,
to seek truth in love,
and to help one another.

Our Vision

*We aspire to be a beacon of
liberal faith, strong community, and transformative service
rooted in Love*

Our Mission

Liberal Faith

*We commit to participate side-by-side across generations in worship, religious education,
social activities, environmental protection,
and social justice work—learning, sharing, and growing together.*

Strong Community

*We commit to care for one another, nurture the light that shines within each of us, and
support each other's individual search for truth and meaning.*

Transformative Service

*We commit to pursue diversity, justice, equality, reason, and discourse;
provide inspiration through music, creativity, and the arts;
and work cooperatively to affect positive change in our community and beyond.*

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Warrant
for the 390th Annual Meeting of
First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church
of Scituate, Massachusetts

June 9, 2024

You are requested to assemble following the service on Sunday, June 9, 2024 to hear and act upon the following articles:

Article I: To receive and approve the Minutes from the May 15, 2023 Annual Meeting, continued on June 4, 2023.

Article II: To receive and act on the reports of the Minister, Staff, Officers, committees and organizations as printed in the Annual Report.

Article III: To receive the Nominating Slate and to elect Officers and Members of the Parish Committee, the Endowment Committee and the Nominating and By-Laws Review Committee for the coming year, beginning June 9, 2024.

Article IV: To receive and act on the plan created by church leadership (Parish Committee, Finance Committee and Endowment Committee) to hire a full time Developmental Minister for a 4-year contract beginning in August 2025 following the end of Erin Splaine's interim ministry.

Article V: To receive and act on the proposal to use yearly withdrawals from the Endowment to fund the plan, outlined in Article IV, as an investment in a minister tasked with helping our congregation redefine, revitalize, and grow our church.

Article VI: To receive the Nominating Slate proposed by the Parish Committee and to elect Search Committee members to select this Developmental Minister.

Article VII: To receive and act on the Annual Budget and the appropriation of money for the 2024-2025 church Fiscal year.

Article VIII: To transact any other business that may properly come before the parish.

Article IX: To Adjourn the Meeting

MJ McGowan

Michael J. McGowan, Moderator

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Scituate, MA

Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting (Day One)

Sunday, May 7, 2023, at 11:30 am

Call to Order:

Moderator Michael McGowan called the meeting to order immediately after the Sunday Service. It commenced at 11:30 am.

Article I

A motion to approve the minutes of 2022 as recorded in the Report to the Annual Meeting was made and seconded.

Vote: The motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously.

Article II

A motion to accept the Reports of the Minister, Staff, Officers, Committees and Organizations as presented in the Report to the Annual Meeting was made and seconded.

Discussion: Jean Shildneck requested additional time to “tweak” the budget and financial reports. They will be completed and distributed prior to the second day of the Annual Meeting, June 4, 2023.

Carey Borkoski, Parish Co-Chair wanted to note the work of the Parish Committee. In particular, she acknowledged to efforts of Co-Chair, Lin Haire-Sargent to develop the Council of Leaders. She, too, shared that our minister of the last ten years, Reverend Pamela Barz will be stepping down. She (Carey) will be working with Lin in finding a new interim minister.

Article III

A motion to accepting the Nominating Slate to Elect Officers and Members of the Parish Committee, the Endowment Committee and the Nominating and By-Laws Committee for the coming year, with Terms beginning June 1, 2023.

Discussion: Jean Shildneck credited long-term member, Alma Morrison for all that she has done. Alma moved to Maine this winter. She urged to the congregation to consider involvement and work on the various committees and hoped that the vacant role of Co-Chair, to work with Lin would be filled by second day of Annual Meeting on June 4, 2023.

A motion to approve Article III was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Article IV:

Moderator, Michael McGowan asked if there was any other business. There being none, there was no vote taken.

Article V:

To suspend the meeting until June 4, 2023.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Discussion: Some members needed clarity as to why the vote was delayed and if they could be assured that the figures of Budget and Finance would be distributed in a timely manner before June 4, 2023. They were assured as to why and when the reports would be shared.

Suspended:

The Annual Meeting was suspended at 11:58 am

Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting (Day Two)
Sunday, June 4, 2023, at 11:30 am

The Moderator, Michael McGowan called the meeting to order at 11:30 am

The final draft of the Budget and Financial Report had been reviewed.

Vote: The motion to accept the Reports was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

The slate was completed with the addition of Ann Svenson to serve as Parish Co-Chair.

Vote: the motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Report of the Minister to the 390th Annual Meeting of the First Parish UU Church of Scituate

Minister's Report

June 2024

What a difference a year makes! A year ago in May, we said yes to each other. A year ago May, you took the bold and tender step to venture forward together. Our journey started in earnest last August and now here at the close of our first year together I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to be your interim minister — awe at the depth of your care, connection, and commitment you all have for your beloved community and hope for your years ahead.

As I wrote in my newsletter column in December, the interim years are “a time for looking back and for looking ahead, for uncovering who you have been and discovering who you want to become together.” An interim period is intentional time you have given yourselves so that you can do the best you can to ensure a solid foundation as you create your next chapter together.

In general, it is a time for us to examine and attend to any issues or goals that are lingering from the previous ministries. In addition to the normal responsibilities of congregational ministry, Interim Ministers possess specific skills in assisting a congregation in what are called the UUA, describes “The Five Developmental Tasks of Interim Ministry.”

They are:

- claiming and honoring its past and engaging and honoring its griefs and conflicts;
- recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges;
- clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition;
- making appropriate use of Regional, UUA, and other outside resources; and
- proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.”

“Ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.” That sentence so encapsulates where you are as you prepare to vote a five-year plan at your Annual Meeting. In the months that followed last September's Ingathering Service you all have gathered in small and large groups for conversation and visioning. Your talented and committed Parish, Finance, and Endowment Committees endeavored to keep First Parish going while simultaneously deepening relationships and dreaming for who and how you all will be going forward. Soon after the turn of the year those committees were joined in their work by the Transitions Team. You all are so well served by such committed, talented, hard-working, forward-thinking, and spiritually grounded leadership.

First Parish is also blessed with a hard-working and committed staff — Beth Dubuisson (who is completing her 19th year as your Music Director), Stephanie Stewart, and Melissa Wakeman.

At the end of our first year together I am so very grateful to be with you — to be one small part of such an amazingly caring, kind, engaged and otherwise remarkable group of people. Thank you for the many ways you share your hearts, spirits, gifts, time and selves to make First Parish the special place that it is.

Respectfully submitted,
Erin Splaine, Interim Minister

Report of the Parish Committee

Entering our first of two years of interim ministry at First Parish, the main duties of the Parish Committee were clear: to introduce our Interim Minister Erin Splaine to the church, to support her in the UU Interim process, and to lead the church in determining our next phase of ministry to commence in June 2025.

We worked closely with the Finance and Endowment committees to understand the financial realities and possibilities for our church and consulted with Erin and the Regional UUA to gain a wider view and understanding of the types of ministry available to us.

It was a year filled with exploration and the discomfort of letting things go to understand better where to build back and build differently. The culmination of which is a plan to search for - and partially finance through our endowment - a developmental minister for the four years beyond our interim ministry.

Highlights of our work this year include:

- We worked with Erin to undertake the transition work that the church must go through to collectively find out who we have been, who we are now, who we aspire to be, and what we want our church to be and do in the coming years. To this end, in the fall we helped Erin schedule and run a series of get-to-know-you meetings that gradually morphed into meetings where the congregation would begin to define themselves and each other in relation to the church.
- We traced the history of the church from 1634 to the present and projected it into the future. Parishioners wrote historical and personal items on post-it stick-ups and arrayed them in a timeline all around the Sloop Room walls.
- The P.C. and the combined leaders of the church, past and present, met in a Saturday retreat to ponder questions of the church's identity. We began to discuss what kind of minister we need to lead us after Erin's Interim ministry expires at the end of next year, and also to collectively examine the finances of the church and figure out how the church can pay for its future.
- The P.C. appointed a Transition Team to help shape the transition from Pam to Erin, and on to the next ministry.
- P.C. co-chairs met with Hilary Allan and Erin several times to gain understanding of the different categories of ministers.
- The P.C. voted to approve a new tenant and lease for the church parsonage. In the Fall, our long-time tenant moved away. As of December 1, 2023, Debra Barnes moved in. Her lease currently runs through June of 2025.
- The P.C. engaged in dialogues with the Finance Committee and the Endowment committee and outlined a "Plan" to search for a full-time Developmental Minister.
 - The Plan calls for meeting the expense of maintaining a full-time minister, projected to exceed the regular income of the church by \$30,000 / year or more, by withdrawals from the Endowment.
 - We recommend hiring a Contract Developmental Minister who, in addition to helping us grow in spiritual ways, will be able to help us grow our membership to a point where we can maintain the church without further withdrawals from the Endowment.

- The P.C. announced and outlined the Plan to the Congregation in a special email in April. This plan will be voted on at this Annual meeting. (See Articles IV and V in the Warrant for the Annual Meeting)
 - The P.C. organized and invited the congregation into dialogue about the aforementioned Plan through a special meeting after the May 5th service and a follow-up online meeting. The Plan is to be voted on at this Annual Meeting. (See Articles IV and V in the Warrant)
 - The P.C. has provided a packet of information regarding the Plan to the Transition Team to disseminate.
- The P.C. called in May for nominations to the Ministerial Search Committee. The Search will commence in the Fall of 2025. We considered all nominations and drafted a slate of Search Committee candidates to be voted on at this Annual meeting. (See Article VI)
- The P.C. has recognized the need to adopt a safety plan for the church in case of Active Shooter or other emergencies. On May 22, members of the Parish Committee and Usher Cathie McGowan attended a Scituate Police safety presentation created for Scituate Churches. The Parish Committee will fashion and implement an effective plan to ready the congregation for action in case of a violent emergency.
- The Parish Committee organized and conducted a Sunday Memorial Day service on May 26.

Respectfully submitted by,

The Parish Committee members for 2023-2024:

Out-going Co-Chair: Lin Haire-Sargeant

In-coming Co-Chair: Ann Svensen

Secretary: Carol Sullivan-Hanley

Treasurer: Erica Boyle

Members at Large: Charlie Ruddy, Jen McGonagle Dziedzic, Richard Kermond

Report of Remote Worship

During the 2023/2024 church year, the Remote Worship Team streamed Sunday morning and special worship services on Facebook for those people who are not able to attend worship in person. Even though the number of people attending worship remotely is very small, offering the live stream continues to be a valuable service.

In previous years, after live-streaming the worship service, a recording was posted to the church's Facebook page for 30 days. Beginning in 2023, worship was live-streamed, but not saved or posted. This is primarily due to copyright issues, but has the added benefit of lifting up church attendance as a communal activity, even for those who can't attend in person.

Remote worship is subject to occasional technical difficulties. Some are caused by changes from Facebook, some are caused internally at First Parish when electrical circuits and/or the modem needs to be reset, and some are due to changes to the church's Apple account. Bob Murdock continues to keep hardware, software, and audio equipment up to date.

Notification of the livestream that goes out each week by email includes a disclaimer that streaming is dependent on availability of a volunteer. Easy-to-follow instructions for streaming the worship service are available in a file folder in the front pew nearest the iPad for times when neither Jean nor Bob are in church.

We are looking for a few more individuals or pairs of individuals who would be willing to set up the Facebook livestream for worship services. We offer a tutorial and provide written instructions. Streaming the worship service is quite easy to do, especially after you have done it once or twice. It requires arriving to worship about 10 minutes early to get set up. Tech savvy youth are welcome to apply for the job!

Respectfully submitted by "The Dream Stream Team,"
Bob Murdock and Jean Shildneck

Report of the Music Director

The following is an overview of the church year as Music Director:

SUNDAY SERVICES:

- Provided the music for 35 Sunday morning services.
- Created the complete order of service for 2 Music Sundays and 1 Hymn Sing service.
- Arranged for substitute musicians in my absence: Christina Laberge, Earth Harmony, Lay members of the congregation.

SPECIAL SERVICES

- Led or co- led 2 summer services: July 23, August 27. (pro-bono)
- Led the music at both the 4:00 and 7:00 Christmas Eve services.

WORKING WITH THE ADULT CHOIR/BELL CHOIR

- Rehearsed with the choir 35 times.
- The following people sang with the adult choir : Mary Beaulieu, Laura Carson-Laciner, Vicki Davis, Alan Donaldson, Jody Doyle, Lin Haire-Sargeant, Cathy Kang, Noah Kermond, Francis Kilduff, Mark Matthews, Cathie McGowan, Sarah Murdock, Carol Sullivan-Hanley.

PLANNING SERVICES:

- Had weekly e-mail correspondence with the church administrator, minister or guest worship leader regarding service music. Selected music (including hymns) to coincide with the theme of each service.
- Purchased new music for piano, organ and choir.
- Entered music selections in the shared google doc every week. Practiced the music at home (and at church)
- Wrote a paragraph for the “What’s happening” newsletter for 10 months.
- Arranged for the Piano tuner to tune the Grand Piano 2 times.
- Arranged to have the Harpsichord tuned 2 times. (paid for the tunings)
- Arranged for Andover Organ to tune the organ November, 2023.
- Met with Erin Splaine and/or attended a church meeting 7 times.
-

AUUMM CONFERENCE

- Attended the association of Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries conference in Baltimore Maryland, July 2023.

My goals for 2024-2025: Help the interim Minister to maintain inspiring Worship Services for First Parish.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Dubuisson, Music Director

Report of the Social Justice and Denominational Affairs

The newest banner created for display on the front of the church proclaims that we “Side with Love” at First Parish Church, meaning that our work to promote justice for people who are oppressed, marginalized or misrepresented is grounded in the belief in universal love. In the 2023-24 church year the Social Justice and Denominational Affairs Committee continued to encourage members of our church family and the broader community to do what they can to make our world a place where all can thrive.

Our new Interim Minister, Erin Splaine, attends our meetings and is helping us determine where we fit into the congregational process of growth and defining who we are/want to be during this period of transition to a new minister. Our committee also grew in numbers as we welcomed two new members. We are now a committee of seven people. Among the responsibilities we fulfilled in the past year, the committee selected the organizations and causes to which the Special Monthly Collections of the church are donated, and we continue to inform the congregation through the church newsletters and weekly emails about news and activities of our Unitarian Universalist denomination, particularly activities of the Unitarian Universalist Association’s (UUA) many Side with Love social justice organizations and the campaigns of the UUMass Action teams. One of our members organized a collection of clothing for Cradles to Crayons, as we have done for years. The Blue Boat Coffee House officially came under the wing of Social Justice, although an independently functioning committee takes responsibility for planning and running the events, which also raises funds for local organizations whose missions align with our Unitarian Universalist values. Funds from the Social Justice budget are being used to fabricate a new banner for Blue Boat Coffee House to be used in the sanctuary during events. The Social Justice Committee supports Conor Doherty’s efforts in the creation and running of the Anti-Racist Working Group meetings with attendance to the meetings and assisting in advertising them to the congregation.

The committee decided in the beginning of 2024 to participate in the Welcome Renewal program, first introduced by the UUA in 2015, as a recommitment to the work the congregation did in 2005-2006 to earn the Welcoming Congregation status letting everyone know that we welcome individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Welcome Renewal is a series of events, activities and worship services that will occur every year to ensure that new members of the congregation as well as long-time members learn about the current needs and concerns of LGBTQ+ people. The committee members participated in leading the worship service on April 21 as part of the kickoff of the process. A few weeks earlier we acknowledged International Transgender Day of Visibility, one of the Days of Observance of dates important to LGBTQ+ individuals, by hosting coffee hour and displaying messages of hope and affirmation for trans people, as well as information on the sobering number of anti-trans bills passed or under consideration by many states in the U.S., including here in Massachusetts. We have begun working with the social justice committee from St. Luke’s Episcopal church on plans for this year’s Pride Breakfast on June 29, ; this year we, along with First Trinitarian Congregational Church, are co-sponsoring the event to be held at St. Luke’s. On May 17 we held a movie and discussion night that was open to the public. The documentary, “Disclosure,” gave a history of the depictions of transgender people in movies and TV and how they have affected the ways people see trans individuals and how trans people see themselves. The audience engaged in meaningful discussion following the movie that seemed to uplift people. We hope to hold this and other types of activities going forward that promote positive dialogue and encourage LGBTQ+ individuals and families to come to First Parish.

We hope to continue to attract new members in the new church year, allowing us to address a broader range of social justice issues and expand the ways First Parish can be of service to the community. Recipients of the Special Collections for the 2023-24 church year:

- Hawaii Community Foundation - Maui Strong Fund

- Plymouth County Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project
- Scituate Food Pantry
- NeighborWorks Housing Solutions
- Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU)
- Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry (UUUM)
- Holly Hill Farm - Farm to Food Pantry Program
- World Central Kitchen
- Summer of Sass

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Isley, Chair, Social Justice and Denominational Affairs Committee

Members: Abby Diamond-Kissiday, Kate Glennon, Diane Jordan, Jean Shildneck, Carol Sullivan-Hanley, Kim Sullivan

Report of the Publicity Committee

General goals for the 2023-24 church year

To promote greater awareness of the church's values and how it lives out its missions and vision.

Accomplishments:

Because most of the work of the church was internal, at this time of ministerial transition, Publicity work was primarily supporting fundraisers and Social Justice initiatives. The banner series continued with this year's addition of a bright orange UUA-branded, Side With Love, banner in the framed spotlight space on the front of the church.

Website and Social Media:

The website was maintained and updated only to reflect the ministerial change, Social Justice committee focus, and adjustments to content. Last year's proposed upgrade in SubSplash, which would have been very intensive, was reversed, and website design is somewhat on hold while the Communications team debates future church management systems and platforms.

Community Events:

Community events included a return of the Blue Boat Coffeehouse, the Snowflake Fair and the Spring Fair, which were all publicised as usual with physical signage and social media. The documentary screening and discussion hosted by the Social Justice Committee as well as the upcoming Pride Breakfast in June was further shared via emails to local churches and organizations.

Goals for 2024-25:

Goals for the coming year include expanding the committee, creating a communications strategy based (a) on any new Church Management System chosen next year and (b) on radical ideas for membership outreach.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Glennon, Chair, Publicity Committee

Report of the Building and Grounds Committee

This year the B&G Committee continued to do minor repairs as needed to the Church and to maintain the Grounds.

The major project we completed was the exterior painting of the Parsonage in preparation for our new Tenant. The painting included replacing of rotten siding and trim.

The lighting in the Old Sloop room has been updated with new energy efficient fixtures.

Monitoring of the Ash Borer continues, fortunately none of them have been spotted as of yet.

The Church was sprayed on the exterior for ants once in Dec and again this Spring. Mice have continued to be a nagging problem, poison can not be used and traps continue to be the best option.

The major projects for 2024/2025 is to paint the lower section of the Church which we could not do this year and to consider some upgrades to the kitchen to allow for increased usage by the Community.

The Memorial Garden gets much more sun now that the trees have been taken down. New plantings and a structure to house the name plates is in the planning

Many Thanks to the many people who help maintain our Church including Frank Kilduff, Pam & Wayne Molinari, Bob Murdoch, Jim Duff, Howard Matthews, Jean Shildneck and Karen Frey.

Respectfully Submitted,
Erica Boyle and Joe Williams

Report of the Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee

Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee – Overview of Responsibilities

The Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee (NBRC) is a three-person committee elected each year by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

The roles and responsibilities of the NBRC are:

1. To nominate for approval by the membership each year at the Annual Meeting:
 - Church Officers,
 - Members of the Parish Committee,
 - Members of the Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee, and
 - Members of the Endowment Committee for any open positions.
 - The NBRC also has the authority to appoint a Member of the Church to fill any vacant positions resulting from the death or resignation of any elected Officer or elected committee member until the next Annual Meeting.
2. To review all proposed changes to the bylaws of the church and recommend to the Membership whether or not they should be approved. The Committee shall also periodically review the bylaws and may recommend changes.

Status report on the Bylaws and Church Governance Policy Document:

- The church is governed by a set of Bylaws. The congregation approved the current version of the Bylaws at the May 2022 Annual Meeting.
- The congregation also approved a new Church Governance Policy Document at the May 2022 Annual Meeting. This document remains incomplete and needs review and input from the Parish Committee.

Church Leaders, 2023/2024:

- The N&BRC expresses deep appreciation to Lin Haire-Sargent, Outgoing Parish Committee Chair, whose term ends this spring. We are grateful for her leadership.
- We are grateful for all members and friends who serve in elected and appointed roles as committee chairs and members, team leaders and members, and our unsung heroes who might not have a formal role, but who nevertheless jump in to help when needed.

Nominations for Elected Positions for the 2024/2025 Church Year:

- The N&BRC has prepared a nominating slate that can be found elsewhere in the church's 2023/2024 Annual Report. The nominating slate reflects the N&BRC effort to create a balance of skills and interests, as well as continuity and sustainability in church leadership, as recommended in the Church Governance Policy Document.
- The Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee recommends one Article for the Warrant for the 2024 Annual Meeting related to Nominations:

Article: To receive the Nominating Slate and to elect Officers and Members of the Parish Committee, the Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee, and the Endowment Committee for the coming year, beginning June 9, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Matthews and Jean Shildneck

Report of the Finance Committee

Finance Committee Overview, 2023/2024 Church Year

The goals of the Committee in 2023/2024 were:

- to see that the church meets the budgeted fundraising targets for the current fiscal year (FY2024),
- to run the Stewardship Canvass to obtain pledges of financial support from members and friends for the next fiscal year (FY2025), and
- to draft revenue and expenditure proposals for the FY2025 budget.

The committee met regularly this year at the church. Committee members took turns chairing meetings and writing meeting notes. We have found that this distributed leadership model has worked well for us for the past year and a half. This year, beginning in January, we also issued a standing invitation to members of the Endowment Committee to join our monthly meetings. We thank Parish Committee member Richard Kermond and Interim Minister Erin Splaine for providing valuable insights when they were able to attend our meetings.

Church Treasurer Erica Boyle, with support from Assistant Treasurer Jean Shildneck, presented monthly Financial Reports to the Finance Committee and to the Parish Committee and served as liaison between the two committees.

The heaviest load on the committee comes in the second half of the year when the committee needs to carefully track actual income and expenses and project year-end income and expenses, all while running the canvass to raise pledges for next year and putting together next year's proposed budget.

This year, the Finance Committee collaborated closely with the Parish Committee and the Endowment Committee to take an especially careful look at church finances as we enter the second year of a two-year contract with our Interim Minister Erin Splaine and begin considering options for church year 2025/2026 and beyond. As we discovered last year, our current level of pledging and ability to raise revenue through fundraisers and rent is not adequate to fund a full-time minister. After many long discussions, broad consensus was reached that we should recommend to the congregation a five-year plan that would allow us to offer a contract of up to four years for a full-time Minister after Erin completes her second year with us as Interim Minister. These discussions included careful consideration of the impact on the endowment, as we will need to withdraw from the principle of the endowment to fund a full-time Minister. Details of the proposal and the estimated impact of the extraordinary withdrawals are included elsewhere in this Annual Report and are the subject of an article on the warrant for consideration by the membership.

Fundraising Activities, 2023/2024 Church Year

Members of the Finance Committee would like to thank everyone who worked on fundraising projects and financial activities this year:

Bottles and Cans Collection – Weekly on Tuesdays. Howard Mathews, Michael McGowan, and Mark McGuinness, along with other volunteers, have sorted redeemable bottles and cans at the Scituate Transfer Station, raising \$5,213 as of the writing of this report. Members and friends are invited to contact Howard Mathews if they are able to help with this fundraising activity.

Snowflake Fair – Saturday, December 2, 2023. Head Elf Eileen Knight, Second in Command Kim Sullivan, and many other elves orchestrated a very successful Snowflake Fair this year. Eileen hosted crafting

parties at her house in the months leading up to the fair, and did a fabulous job communicating about the fair, including recruiting members and friends to produce items for the fair, staff the fair, and attend the fair to make their holiday purchases. Net revenues from this year's Snowflake Fair were \$14,150.

Spring Fair – Saturday, May 11, 2024. This year's Spring Fair included the sale of organic seedlings (veggies and annuals), perennials from members and friends' gardens, baked goods, spring crafts, a lemonade stand, and a free seed-planting activity for children. This year's fair raised \$2,640.

Fiscal Year 2024 Year-To-Date Financial Reports

Year-To-Date Financial Reports are included as attachments to this Annual Report.

It should be noted that, due to extra distributions from the endowment funds needed to cover operating expenses in FY2024, the Finance Committee decided not to make a scheduled loan payment of \$5,000 this year. That payment will be made no later than the date of the final payment due per the loan agreement. The Finance Committee will add a summary of the loan agreement, payments made, and balance due on the loan in next year's and subsequent annual reports.

2024 Pledge Drive/Stewardship Canvass

The Finance Committee drafted a Preliminary Proposed Budget for FY2025 in February 2024 assuming level-funding for Interim Minister Erin Splaine, slight increases for our Music Director, Church Administrator, and Religious Education Teacher, and funding for an expanded Religious Education program in FY2024. The Preliminary Proposed Budget anticipated \$282,500 in expenses, and we set an ambitious goal of raising \$125,000 from pledges to help pay for those expenses.

Prior to launching the Pledge Drive, the Finance Committee asked all elected leaders of the church (Church Officers plus members of the Parish Committee, the Endowment Committee, and the Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee) plus all members of the Finance Committee to pledge early. We had close to 100% participation from leadership before we launched the canvass with the rest of the congregation.

The Pledge Drive was officially launched with Stewardship Sunday being held on March 3, 2024. The annual pledge packet was sent out to all members and friends of the church by email on March 4. Stewardship testimonials and updates from the Finance Committee were offered from the pulpit on Sundays throughout the months of March and April. Follow-up emails, calls, texts, and letters were also sent, with additional communications in What's Happening and the monthly newsletter. The Pledge Drive resulted in \$105,000 in pledges. This is the highest pledge level we have ever achieved, and we are grateful for every pledge received. However, as mentioned above in the overview section, we are still not raising enough money to cover our expenses.

Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget

The proposed budget for FY2025 includes anticipated expenses of \$277,600. In order to cover those expenses, we will have to withdraw approximately \$95,000 from the endowment next year. This includes our normal withdrawal of approximately \$41,600 (representing 4 percent of the current value of the endowment) plus an additional \$53,200 (which will decrease the endowment's principle).

The Proposed Budget for FY2025 is included as an attachment to the Annual Report. The Finance Committee, Endowment Committee, and Parish Committee recommend that the members approve this budget.

Respectfully submitted by the Finance Committee,
Erica Boyle, Janie Culbert, Vicki Davis, Karen Frey, Cathie McGowan, Jean Shildneck, and Richard Towle

Year to Date Financial Reports

The Balance Sheet, the Profit & Loss Statement and the Budget vs. Actual Report are available as PDF files.

Click to view the [*FPUU Balance Sheet at 2024-05-24*](#)

Click to view the [*FPUU Profit & Loss Statement at 2024-05-24*](#)

Click to view the [*FPUU Budget vs. Actuals Report at 2024-05-24*](#)

FY2025 Proposed Budget

The FY2025 Proposed Budget is available as a PDF file.

Click to view the [*FY2025 Proposed Budget*](#)

Report of the Snowflake Fair

Report of the 2023 Snowflake Fair (SF) Committee

SF 2023 Goals

1. Match 2022 fair proceeds (and hopefully by-pass it)- spreadsheet attached.
2. Increase natural materials for the wreaths & artisans crafts.
3. Develop a SF recyclable wrapping paper and fabric/cloth ribbon.
4. Develop a calendar of pre-fair events, including Fididdler crafts. Publicize to get more people involved.

SF 2023 Accomplishments:

1. Parishioner Kim Sullivan joined me as Snowflake Fair co-chair. Kim is a pleasure to work with and a kind person; she does a fabulous job at researching and pricing the fair merchandise. This was her 2nd year pricing. She updated the stickers and tags used to raise our overall professionalism.
2. We matched and exceeded 2022 financial goals.
3. VENMO sales soared!
4. We increased natural materials to decorate wreaths and create artisan merchandise. We also used many repurposed supplies donated by parishioners (that keep things out of our landfill.).
5. Parishioner Fish McGill created an amazing recyclable wrapping paper for the fair. (Although we didn't get to the ribbon, the Fididdlers continue to work on it.)
6. A calendar of Fididdlers/SF events was created and maintained throughout the year via the church monthly newsletters, What's Happening newsletter and the Friends of First Parish website.
7. Parishioner (and Fididdler) Suzanne Oliver volunteered to lead a daytime Fididdlers session for parishioners who are interested in crafting but don't want to be out at night.
8. Two new tables (Plaid pop-up store and Nature/Birds table) were added to the merch floor to add something new to the traditional fair tables (fudge, baked goods, Grandma's Cupboard, Artisan's crafts, bulbs, jewelry.). People responded well to the new merchandise; both tables did well. (See Fair financials). Each table focused on using re-purposed goods and home-grown seeds, supplied by church members (flannel shirts, worn jeans, tea cups and saucers, glass vases and jars), to make new and unique holiday gifts.
9. The pre-fair meeting was held in the sanctuary to escape from people waiting to enter the fair. This gave fair co-chairs a chance to update Fair table volunteers about last minute announcements, hand out table emergency procedures and thank everyone in a quiet environment. Before heading out to tables, Beth led us in an inspirational song that centered everyone and set the mood for a great day.

10. Hal Stokes created/installed more hanging signage for new tables, children's 2nd floor events/store and the kitchen. These signs really make the fair look like a real marketplace. (They are stored in the SF closet)
11. Table signage was created to encourage VENMO sales and promote the \$10 or less gifts available.
12. Shannon Vaughan did an amazing job organizing and running the children's activities/store on the 2nd floor. This year children's gifts for their parents were wrapped- such a nice touch!
13. Sheryl Pace did a fantastic job recruiting high school volunteers for the 2nd year. The high school students were fun, engaging and willing to do whatever we asked them to do. (This year we were short on staff volunteers so they REALLY stepped up to help out).
14. The church kitchen & café (RE area) were back in action with a food vendor "Mom on the Go".
15. Police detail was in place by the start of the fair with lights flashing to attract attention.
16. Wreath decorating chili dinner went well. There was plenty left for thurs/Friday set up days.

SF 2023 Obstacles:

1. There is no established pre-fair budget for fair set-up costs. . The co-chairs should not be responsible for set up costs.
2. The church kitchen is not safe-serv certified; the church loses out on café food sales.
3. There is one less sandwich board than SF 2022. Last year we had 6; this year we have 5.
4. Overall parishioner fair participation was down. Fewer people do more work.

Recommendations for SF2024:

1. Establish a budget for set up expenses.
2. Create a Parish committee/SF calendar of check in meetings to offer SF chair support
3. Build more sandwich boards for around town advertising
4. Develop family programming marketing strategies to draw young families from Santa's visit to the SF
5. Continue to offer a one item/table all-inclusive raffle basket; it was a huge hit.
6. Continue pop-up store idea; it was also a big hit.
7. Wendy Ballinger notes re: Cashier table staffing/equipment/logistics attached
8. De-brief meeting notes attached.

2023 Snowflake Fair De-Brief

What worked well/what did we like?

- Craft/kids activity
- Kids shopping area and “elf bucks” are always a big crowd pleaser.
- Kids very happy with the option of gift wrapping.
- Pre-fair meeting and sing-along before the fair started in the sanctuary
- Emergency plan for each table
- Police presence including car with lights flashing out front
- Steady stream of people this year
- Table signs above each table (Fudge, Baked Goods, Checkout...)
- Flow of tables was good
- Café set up in RE area (missing for last couple of years)
- Everything at Baked Goods was presented well
- Tiered shelving for Grandma’s Cupboard
- Nature/Bird area was so well displayed
- Potpourri smell wafting (at baked goods table in crock pot)
- Small plastic animals in the bulbs/plants
- Small gift items that were not that expensive
- Fair is engaging and creative- sense of hominess
- GREAT student volunteer turnout.
- Volunteers and kids love the fair
- Pop-Up table (Plaid): change idea/products every year
- 2 new booths added element of surprise (Plaid & Birds/Nature tables)
- Pre-fair Videos on Facebook
- Birdbaths (at Birding/Nature table) a focal point of interest and sold well
- Seeds sold well this year at the bird/nature table
- Venmo is easy and was well used

- Checkout/cashier area position
- Sustainable gifts
- Raffle basket
- Owl ornaments sold

What didn't work well/what didn't we like?

- Playing of piano was too loud and disruptive to Beth's students' recital (in sanctuary)
- Didn't have a lot of young families or young professionals come
- Some visitors needed physical assistance this year -signage needed to direct people to ramp
- A lot of bulbs left over (we did 60 this year)
- Most volunteers did not know how to wrap gifts
- Cost of jars/ingredients affected Grandma's Cupboard profit
- Increase jewelry prices
- Wreaths get dried out in the front entry way- hot air
- Checkout/cashier was congested (See specific notes from Wendy at end)
- Votive candles didn't sell as well as expected as people didn't know they were for sale
- Handmade paper might have sold better if we gift wrapped some boxes
- Late items were difficult to tag on Saturday AM- everything needs to arrive Friday or VERY early Saturday morning (or let person pricing know what is coming so stickers can be pre-made)
- Kay Shaw card packets did not sell well. Consider selling them as individual cards.

Ideas/suggestions for next year?

- Police presence inside or have police person that is outside phone # at each table to call in
- Jewelry table needs to have table workers in front of table watching shoppers as well as behind tables.
- Have volunteers at front door & at ramp to help out those who need assistance
- Add Greeter to give a rundown/overview of what is inside and/or an easel
- Give out a written handout with what is available inside and a history of First Parish UU
- Volunteers come earlier on Saturday (fair day)(a lot came at 1pm)

- Do some training with volunteers on Friday or send an email ahead of time
- More teen volunteers- they do need to know this if for a religious organization before committing
- Communicate with bakers ahead of time to package well or bring in on Friday and we will package & price
- Bakers should identify what the baked goods are to assist those working at the table
- Need baked good signs for each item
- Need a tiered display/shelving for Baked Goods (similar to what Grandma's Cupboard had)
- Consider making cheese spreads
- Samples? Teen volunteer could walk around and offer samples
- More plants to add to bulb table? Maybe Succulents, small poinsettias, driftwood with air plant
- Have some bulbs that are already flowering
- Carolers outside, or "Little Women" dressed volunteers
- Outdoor decoration Pop-up; Tree box, palette decorations, wreaths on display, birch reindeers
- Add centerpieces to bulb table
- Sample of centerpiece- cranberries, pinecones, have a kit to put together at home
- White Elephant, Jumble Sale? (issue with storage though. Needs to be curated/theme. Vintage holiday theme?)
- Increase wreath prices?
- Refilling wreaths as needed and keep in the garage or keep them outside
- Make a sturdy wreath rack for outside (similar to COVID years)? put on table as well
- Kids face painting
- Wrapping in gift bags for kids table
- ? Changing time of fair to accommodate other fairs that are at same time
- Organize Group/community fair advertising/messaging with other church fairs in Scituate/Cohasset/Marshfield
- Eliminate cash at individual tables- everyone checks out at Cashier (cash/check/VENMO)
- Checkout area staffed with 3 persons- one for cash, one for Venmo, one for credit card
- Larger Venmo signs at tables
- Raffle basket on display someplace other than check out (Maybe Grandma's Cupboard)
- Baskets or bags to do shopping and chance to purchase if they want to keep- no too large

- Live music in the café (keyboard)
- Serve wassail- hot mulled cider
- Advent calendar craft
- Native seeds in jars, make a gift basket (with book)
- Sell suet cakes in package of 3
- Knitted/crochet animals (owls)
- Child hat/mitten
- Salve/skin care products made out of natural products-essential oils/calendula seeds/bees wax/lavender put in tins (dry seeds end of Aug- beginning of Oct)
- Give student volunteers who work a certain # of hours a lunch voucher
- Increase wood craft items to balance out cloth items.
- Paper bags sold well- consider adding fabric bags
- Add items for year-round use- not just for the holidays

Mom on the Go Food truck (indoors) feedback?

- Mixed feedback on the food sold- some loved it, some not so much.
- People loved that the church kitchen was back in use.
- Café encouraged people to do more shopping after eating
- Tagging “Mom on the Go” on social media spread the word
- No one knew food was in the kitchen- only had one sign- needed one at entrance as well.

Thoughts on providing food next year?

- Customers want soups/chilis/chowders to come back-We’re known for our soups
- Church Kitchen needs town certifications to be able to serve
- Need to have food that people can “take away”
- A fun “man group” ran this in the past- it would be nice to have them back

Action Items

- Damian Sullivan to become Safe Serve Certified
- Get kitchen inspected to serve food
- Kim Sullivan to set up Instagram/TikTok pages to advertise fair

Non-Fair Action Items

- Electrician to assess lighting in Sloop Room
- Bring back *Unity* Dinners again with speakers like “seed saving” topics

Wendy Ballinger Report: Snowflake Fair Cashier Table

(email shared with Parish committee co-chairs and Finance Committee)

The table needs to be staffed by two-and-a-half or three people (especially if you are considering sending all customers to the cashier): one person to handle credit cards and checks (which are the two payments that take longest); one to handle cash and Venmo, and one person to handle the accounting, reconciling and moving the slips and money in to the Collectors. (If more individual tables take payments in the future, you could get by with two people.)

We need a different credit card processing square from Vanco (or another company if we change credit card processors). The current device requires a headphone jack attached to an iPad to work (and those jacks have mostly been phased out). Vanco says it will work with a dongle attached to the charger port, but multiple attempts over several years showed that, for our current device, that isn't true. Additionally, the process would be much faster if the device was equipped to accept taps.

It would be a good idea to make a stand-up sign with the Venmo QR code just so that it is more visible as people approach the table.

Individual tables, if they are not taking payment from the customer, should make sure they fill in the slip with the amount to be charged. A number of people came to me to check out and didn't know how much their items cost and, of course, neither did I.

It would be a good idea to have a small pre-printed stack of receipts for people buying wreaths or trees (Erica, Ellen and Jane never questioned anyone who said they paid, but some customers were nervous about being believed).

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Knight, Snowflake Fair Committee Chair

Report of the Collectors

The Collectors of First Parish are elected officers of the church, responsible for seeing that all monies received by the church are recorded, deposited and reported to the Treasurer. They also issue statements to pledging church members and resolve any discrepancies or payment questions regarding pledges and donations. Monies include pledges, Sunday plate, fundraisers, rental fees, electronic payments and any other payments received. The Collectors are also active members of the Finance Committee and provide guidance to the annual stewardship drive and church budget preparation.

In 2023 they also participated in a committee reviewing the church's administrative software applications, with an intention to replace our beloved but outdated MemInfo (the system used to record pledges and pledge and donation payments) with a more modern and integrated platform. We hope to report on that in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Davis and Cathie McGowan, Co-Collectors

Report of the Ushers

Ushers greet Sunday morning attendees at the door of the sanctuary, handing out Orders of Service and performing any other needed duties during the service, including taking the Collection and greeting visitors. At the conclusion of the service they neaten up the Sanctuary and make sure that everything is ready for the following week. They also perform these duties on Christmas Eve as well as assist with any other services (Memorial Services, etc.) as needed during the year.

This year they also participated in a Safety and Security presentation by the Scituate Police Department along with members of other Scituate churches.

In 2023-24, usher duties were handled by Vicki Davis and Cathie McGowan with assistance from Carol Sullivan-Hanley and Michael McGowan.

It is hoped that the Usher Team can be re-established and begin sharing responsibilities in the new church year. Anyone in high school or older is invited and welcomed to join the Usher Team.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathie McGowan and Vicki Davis, Head Ushers

Report of the Endowment Committee

Listed below is the projected FY2024 balance (6/30/24) of the Endowment accounts:

Boston Financial (Schwab):	\$613,808
Vanguard:	\$401,192
UUA:	\$ 22,000
 Total projected:	 \$1,037,000

Over this past year the Endowment Committee and the Finance Committee worked carefully to come up with a five year plan (attached) to fund a new Developmental Minister. If approved, this plan would allow for using withdrawals of endowment principal in addition to the usual 3-4% interest that over the years has helped to fund the church budget.

Next year we plan to meet with several investment advisors to explore opportunities to reduce fees, improve investment management services, and enhance performance. We also will carefully monitor the 5 year plan, pending its approval at Annual Meeting.

First Parish Church Five Year Endowment & Budget Projection
May 9, 2024

FY	Endowment Balance 7/1	Expense Budget	Endowment Drawdown	Extra Drawdown	Pledge Income	Other Income	Endowment Bal. 6/30
2025	\$1,040,000	\$277,600	\$41,600	\$53,200	\$105,000	\$77,800	\$992,460
2026	\$992,460	\$287,316	\$39,700	\$58,418	\$108,675	\$80,523	\$939,059
2027	\$939,059	\$297,372	\$37,562	\$63,990	\$112,479	\$83,341	\$879,382
2028	\$879,382	\$307,780	\$35,175	\$69,931	\$116,416	\$86,258	\$812,990
2029	\$812,990	\$318,552	\$32,250	\$76,265	\$120,490	\$89,227	\$739,415

Assumptions:

Based on the FY 2025 Proposed Budget as revised on May 7, 2024.. A 3.5% escalation has been applied to expenses, pledge income and other income annually beginning in FY 2026. No net, new growth in Pledging Parish Members. The standard draw from the Endowment is projected at 4% with an endowment return on investment of 5% per year (consistent with the average rate of return over the past 5 years). The projected extra draw is the amount required to balance the budget each year. The base budget includes funding for a full-time minister at the current compensation level, plus Cost of Living Increases 2026-2029. The 7/30/25 Endowment Projection equals the April month-end balances, minus the remaining drawdowns, plus an increase in investments of .83%% for the last two months of the fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted for the Endowment Committee,

Vicki Davis (Mark Matthews, Cathie McGowan, Sarah Murdock, Claire Sherman)

Thanks also to Richard Towle for his valuable feedback

Documents for Voting

FY 2023-2024 Proposed Budget

The FY2024 Proposed Budget is available as a PDF file.

Click to view the File
[*FY2024 Proposed Budget*](#)

Slate of Nominees - Officers, Parish Committee, Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee, Endowment Committee

SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR 2024/2025

Terms run from June 9, 2024 to May 31, 2025 (note that terms of office do not run concurrently with the church's fiscal year). According to the 2022 revision of the church's bylaws, the term for all positions is for one year, with the exception of the Endowment Committee, for which the term is two years. According to the Church Governance Policy document, nominees are requested to commit to a minimum of two years in a position. The Co-Chairs of the Parish Committee serve one year each as Incoming and Outgoing, for a total of two years.

Church Officers

Moderator Michael McGowan

Clerk (also serves as Secretary of the Parish Committee) Carol Sullivan-Hanley

Treasurer (also serves as a member of the Parish Committee) Erica Boyle

Collector Vicki Davis

Parish Committee

Parish Committee Co-Chair (Outgoing) Ann Svensen

Parish Committee Co-Chair (Incoming) Kate Glennon

Parish Committee Member-at-Large Jen McGonagle

Parish Committee Member-at-Large Charlie Ruddy

Parish Committee Member-at-Large Richard Kermond

Assistant Treasurer and Collector

Assistant Treasurer Jean Shildneck

Assistant Collector Cathie McGowan

Nominating and Bylaws Review Committee

Member at Large Jean Shildneck

Member at Large Mark Matthews

Member at Large Lin Haire-Sargent

Endowment Committee

Term expires May 31, 2026; eligible for one more term Sarah Murdock

Term expires May 31, 2026; eligible for one more term Claire Sherman

Term expires May 31, 2026; eligible for two more terms Richard Towle

Term expires May 31, 2026; eligible for two more terms Richard Leach

FYI: Term expires May 31, 2025; eligible for two more terms Mark Matthews

FYI: Term expires May 31, 2025; eligible for two more terms Cathie McGowan

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Matthews (marcus2tts@gmail.com)

Jean Shildneck (jean_shildneck@comcast.net)

Carey Borkoski (careyborkoski@gmail.com)

Slate of Nominees - Ministerial Search Committee

The Ministerial Search Committee is tasked with finding a developmental minister to work with our congregation over a four year period beginning in June of 2025. A developmental minister is a contract position, to be voted on and hired by the Parish Committee in the Spring of 2025.

After careful consideration, the Parish Committee nominates the following candidates from the congregation for election to the 2024-2025 First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Scituate Ministerial Search Committee.

Ministerial Search Committee

Mary Beaulieu

Laura Carson

Abby Diamond-Kissiday

Jim Duff

Mary Ann Perry