

Ministerial Settlement System

Congregational Record

The Unitarian Universalist Association declares and affirms its special responsibility, and that of its member congregations and organizations, to promote the full participation of persons in all of its and their activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin.

Congregation: **First Parish in Milton UU**

Website address: **fpmilton.org**

Ministry title: **Minister**

Congregation Size: **II**

Congregation Wage Rate Area: **5**

Salary plus Housing: **\$86000**

Do the benefits and professional expenses provided for this position meet (or even exceed) the UUA Transitions Office recommendations as described in the "Open for Business" section of the [Settlement Handbook \(PDF\)](#)? **Yes**

If there is a range in the S&H, describe the objective, measurable criteria you will use in categorizing a potential candidate.

High **\$92,000 - 10 years relevant experience**

Mid **\$86,000 - 8 years relevant experience**

Low **\$80,000 - 6 years relevant experience**

Is the minister expected to occupy a parsonage? **no**

How much of the S&H is attributable to rental value? **0** To utilities? **0**

Number of adult members: **191** Av. Sunday attendance: **106**

Children & youth enrollment: **78** Av. children & youth attendance: **50**

Total operating expenditures: **490,257**

Total operating pledge income: **213,100** Number of pledge units: **101**

How many Sunday services? **1** Others during the week? **0**

How many months per year is the church at full operating capacity? **9**

Describe the character of the surrounding community:

The Town of Milton is a southern suburb of Boston, separated from the Boston neighborhoods of Dorchester and Mattapan by the Neponset River. Proximity to the city of Boston and its great cultural institutions is a major draw for Milton. Public transportation to Boston, Cambridge and to some points south is available but Milton wins its residents over based on its own merits.

An affluent community of approximately 27,000, Milton has three times been ranked in the Top Ten Best Places to Live by Money Magazine, reaching # 2 in 2011. It is noted by Wikipedia as having the highest percentage of citizens claiming Irish heritage of any town in the country--38%!

The public school system has a reputation for excellence, and is one of only two cities in Massachusetts with an optional grades 1 -5 French immersion program. The program draws many young families here, but it is also an ongoing source of contention concerning the allocation of resources and the lack of French language special needs services.

Parents are active and engaged with the schools, and a thriving Milton Foundation for Education raises significant funds for the system. Music and sports are both well supported.

Milton is also home to Milton Academy, a prestigious private school with an international reputation, as well as Fontbonne Academy, a Catholic girls' high school, and two Catholic elementary schools. Curry College, a small liberal arts school committed to students with a range of learning styles rounds out the educational picture of the town. Milton's location in the Boston metropolitan area also provides easy access to the big name universities and colleges in the region.

Though most housing lots in the town are less than a fifth of an acre, Milton is a pleasant, wooded suburban town with some larger estates. The town abuts the Blue Hills Reservation, a 7,000 acre state park whose forest, ponds, hiking trails, and ski slope provide year-round recreation. Commercial areas within Milton are limited, and the tax base of the town is mostly residential.

Although on the whole Milton is very affluent, there is a population in Milton with real economic needs. 18% of the town's households have less than a \$30,000 in annual income. We have an active food bank in the town, and several local assistance funds have proven insufficient to fulfill all of the requests made in recent years. A significant portion of the local assistance funds come from our

parish endowment and are managed by a social worker hired by the Trustees of the Parish Funds.

The town is 85% white, 10% black/African-American, and 5% other races/ethnicities. While neighborhoods are not strictly segregated, the majority of students of color are concentrated in one of the four elementary schools. There is an active organization, Citizens for a Diverse Milton, that sponsors activities promoting racial and ethnic unity within the town, and the school department has been steadily building diverse faculty and leadership for two decades.

There is a high level of civic pride, expressed annually through an open air music festival and fireworks display during the summer and on an ongoing basis by committed members of the community who work passionately to celebrate more of the arts in town. The town is also extraordinarily devoted to youth sports for both boys and girls through all seasons - as you might expect in a town that is a 37 minute drive from both Fenway Park to the north and Gillette Stadium to the south.

UUA District: Mass Bay District Executive: Meck Groot

APF contribution: 12,840 Fair Share? yes

Ministerial settlement rep.: Laura Graham Compensation Consultant: Jim Peterson

Provide your profile of the minister you seek:

We have ambitious hopes for our new minister. Above all, we'd like him or her to foster a growing sense of fellowship and community within the congregation as well as present stimulating and challenging worship services. Organized, well-thought out sermons are important to us, as are excellent communication skills. As one parishioner said in our survey, we seek "someone to challenge us spiritually, morally, and intellectually--to deeper understanding, compassion, and action."

We're looking for an open-minded person with the ability to draw from a multitude of religious and spiritual practices. Though much of our service and symbolism is from the Christian tradition, our curious congregants find wisdom in many religious traditions.

We hope for a person with empathy and warmth. Approachability and being a people person are important to maintaining meaningful and functional relationships with both members and staff. A sense of humor is a real plus, as is the ability to be open about the personal foibles of our shared humanity. Ideally,

our next minister would be both a good listener and a good storyteller, not afraid to show his or her true self.

We want someone who can become one of us, yet can draw us out to be our best selves. We're yearning to be stretched; we'd like our spirits to be filled up on Sunday with inspiration that spurs us to use our unique gifts to go out into the world on Monday and do good things. But we also recognize that healing and rejuvenation need to take place within and among ourselves, and we'd love our minister to help create a space for renewal and relationship-building.

Lastly, we seek a minister who, with compassion and insight, can see a path to making our parts work together to unlock our great potential. An ability to guide committees to alignment on goals and to support lay leaders in finding their callings are vital skills. In the end, we hope our next minister can help us to distill the vision we feel is percolating beneath the surface of First Parish, waiting to be brought forth as a "glowing coal."

Provide your profile of your congregation:

Who We Are

Like many Unitarian Universalist congregations in New England, we are a long-standing community at 337 years old, possessing a long and proud tradition and a venerable and beautiful Meetinghouse and campus--and all the financial challenges that go with it.

First Parish of Milton draws members from many surrounding communities, but is predominated by Milton residents. We are a mid-sized congregation of over 200 active members and friends, mostly white, well-educated, and reasonably comfortable financially.

We are led by our Parish Committee and guided financially by the Trustees of the Parish Funds, who manage our endowment.

Our Congregational Survey elicited responses from 73% of our membership. The survey tells us that 74% of respondents have been affiliated with First Parish for six years or more, 83% are between the ages of 40 and 70, 76% are married, and female respondents outnumbered males two to one. 39% attend First Parish without a partner. 16% of respondents identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

What Is Important to Us

It is notable that 85% of our survey respondents cited our strong sense of

community as our most valuable asset. The majority of us come to First Parish to get our batteries recharged, and we do a good job of taking care of one another. But there is also a wish, expressed particularly in our October cottage meetings, to have more opportunities to connect with one another in small groups outside of worship services, coffee hour, and committee meetings. This would include a revival of our Small Group Ministry program as well as more frequent “one-off” opportunities to get to know one another spiritually.

Our respondents also expressed a strong wish for First Parish to have a broader outreach to the larger community and for our social action efforts to be re-visioned, though there is a broad range of opinion about how this should be accomplished. It has been noted that a high percentage of our congregation are very actively engaged in civic affairs and community programs as individuals, but that we need to do a better job of being a united congregational presence within the larger community, both in Milton and beyond.

There is considerable strength, creativity, and energy among the members of this community. We could use some help to get it better focused.

What role do the congregation and its leaders expect the minister to play in relation to the other paid staff?

We expect our new minister to provide a clear vision for the congregation, a vision that would be supported by the paid staff. Our staff has expressed a preference for a minister whose administrative style is collaborative, and the search committee shares that inclination. The minister’s specific administrative role doesn’t concern us as long as the parish’s affairs are well managed.

The minister is the CEO by default, but the search committee recognizes that executive styles can vary significantly from person to person. We are more interested in hearing how candidates propose to work with the staff to achieve a well-managed parish than we are in stipulating specific methods in advance.

Congregational history:

How and when was the congregation founded?

The first Meetinghouse in Milton was built sometime between 1650 and 1660. The structure served the community not only as a house of worship for our Puritan ancestors but as the town’s public meetinghouse. The town cared for the property and paid the minister’s salary. At the time Milton was called Unquity, and was still part of Dorchester, which is now a neighborhood of Boston, but which was a separate town. At the time, the congregants were official members of the First Parish of Dorchester.

In 1662, the Town of Milton became incorporated, legally separating from Dorchester. Ten years later, the Second Meetinghouse was built, the parish was organized, and ten men subscribed to the Covenant. Peter Thacher became the first settled minister and served the congregation for forty-seven years.

Note the three or four most important events in the congregation's history:

The modern history of the congregation can be traced to the incorporation of the parish as an institution separate from the town in 1818 followed by years of theological contention that ultimately led to a split between Trinitarians and Unitarians in early 1826. This period reached its apex (or nadir, depending on your point of view) when the Parish officially became Unitarian in 1834 and the Reverend Dr. Samuel Gile, a committed Calvinist, withdrew from the parish along with a number of congregants. There followed many years of charismatic leadership and a vibrant church life under beloved ministers Roderick Stebbins and Vivian Pomeroy who served 39 and 30 years respectively. The 1980s under Patrick Green's leadership were marked by growth of the religious education program and a successful \$600,000 capital campaign.

Both of these events set the stage for contemporary First Parish, and in the last decade, a new covenant was adopted, replacing the Ames covenant that had been in use for over a century. The new covenant is notable for its emphasis on many spiritual paths and the fact that it lacks any reference to Jesus Christ, who had been central to the previous one.

List, most recent first, all clergy who have served since 1950 and earlier ministers of great importance, and interim ministers since 1980 (minister name, date arrived, date departed, reason for departure):

Hank Peirce, interim, 2015 - present

Parisa Parsa, 2004 - 2014, resigned amicably

John Robinson, interim, 2002 - 2004

Laurie Hotchkiss, 1997 - 2002, resigned due to illness

Janet E. Newman, interim, 1996 - 1997

Mark W. Harris, 1989 - 1996, conflict with congregation

Michael Boardman, 1987 - 1989

Patrick G. Green, 1981 - 1987, left to become a UCC minister

Charles L. Wilson, interim, 1980 - 1981

Philip M. Larson, Jr., 1976 - 1980, resigned due to illness

Prescott Winterstein, 1961 - 1976, retired

Malcolm R. Sutherland, Jr., 1954 - 1960, left to become UUA Executive Secretary

Vivian T. Pomeroy, 1924 - 1954, retired
Roderick Stebbins, 1886 - 1925, retired
Frederick Frothingham, 1876 - 1889
Francis Tucker Washburn, 1871 - 1873
John Hopkins Morrison, 1846 - 1886
Joseph Angier, 1837 - 1845
Benjamin Huntoon, 1834 - 1837
Samuel Gile, 1807 - 1834
Joseph McKean, 1797 - 1804
Nathaniel Robbins, 1751 - 1795
John Taylor, 1728 -1750
Peter Thacher, 1680 - 1727
Samuel Man, 1678 - 1680

Current clergy and staff (include all paid staff):

Position	Date of hire/call	F/T or hrs. per week	Covered by Health Plan?	Covered by Retire Plan?	Annualized Compensation (S&H for clergy)	Supervised by/ reports to:	Member?
Minister	8/16/2014	FT	yes	yes	82,500	Parish Committee	no
Director of Congregational Life and Administration	9/9/2013	FT	yes	yes	62,424	Minister	no
Religious Education and Office Administrator	3/1/2013	FT	yes	yes	41616	DCLA/Minister	yes
Sexton	7/1/2009	17	no	no	15,000	DCLA	no
Music Director	9/1/14	15	no	no	19,000	Minister	yes
Youth Advisor	9/1/13	10	no	no	6242	Minister	no
Intergenerational Music	9/1/14	10	no	no	4590	Minister	yes

Table I Membership, Attendance, and Pledging

Year Ending	Data Represents	Months	Adult Members	Average Adult Sunday Attendance	Children & Youth Enrollment	Average Children & Youth Attendance	No. of Pledge Units	Total Operating Pledges	Operating Pledge per pledge Unit (col 6/col 5)
2015	a twelve-month year	9	191	81	078	50	99	209422	2115
2014	a twelve-month year	9	215	106	98			213199	
2013	a twelve-month year	9	214	100	113			221918	
2012	a twelve-month year	9	218	101	137			238950	
2011	a twelve-month year	9	226	107	129			186601	
2005	a twelve-month year	9	203	100		80	115	127996	1112
2000	a twelve-month year	9						90000	
1995	a twelve-month year	9						58105	

Table II Sources of Operating Income

Year Ending	Total Operating Pledges	Other Contributions	Fundraising Events	Endowment Investment Income	Building Rentals	Other Income	Total Income (sum of 1...6)	Total Endowment
2015	\$ 209422	\$ 17000	\$ 11000	\$ 157500	\$ 41000	\$ 11900	\$ 447822	\$ 6039069
2014	\$ 213199	\$ 15326	\$ 24600	\$ 199500	\$ 36985	\$ 5720	\$ 495330	\$ 5489029
2013	\$ 221918	\$ 13983	\$ 6550	\$ 198046	\$ 40257	\$ 24780	\$ 505534	\$ 4516948
2012	\$ 238950	\$ 14000	\$ 0	\$ 155156	\$ 52000	\$ 3000	\$ 463106	\$ 4266779
2011	\$ 186601	\$ 17112	\$ 6878	\$ 209719	\$ 51441	\$ 5498	\$ 477249	\$ 4237031

2005	\$ 127996	\$ 9000	\$ 7455	\$ 206400	\$ 19000	\$ 0	\$ 369851	\$ 4800000
2000	\$ 90000	\$ 8134	\$ 0	\$ 208640	\$ 0	\$ 15000	\$ 321774	\$ 6089443
1995	\$ 58105	\$ 5000	\$ 0	\$ 187938	\$ 0	\$ 15200	\$ 266243	

Table III Operating Expenses

Year Ending	Building & Grounds & Utilities	Minister S&H	Minister's Benefits & Professional Expenses	Other Staff Compensation	Religious Education	Social Justice & Service	Debt Service	Other Current Expenses	Total Expenses	Total Debt
2015	\$ 82650	\$ 82500	\$ 26134	\$ 158022	\$13867	\$ 19823	\$ 0	\$ 72400	\$ 455396	\$ 0
2014	\$ 116321	\$ 89953	\$ 31169	\$ 179955	\$12550	\$ 19823	\$ 0	\$ 91684	\$ 541455	\$ 0
2013	\$ 62426	\$ 89813	\$ 30370	\$ 191601	\$8050	\$ 20492	\$ 0	\$ 83100	\$ 485852	\$ 0
2012	\$ 80000	\$ 88147	\$ 27544	\$ 229332	\$6000	\$ 20492	\$ 0	\$ 69357	\$ 520872	\$ 0
2011	\$ 103953	\$ 81868	\$ 26222	\$ 211020	\$8800	\$ 20492	\$ 0	\$ 65585	\$ 517940	\$ 0
2005	\$ 56050	\$ 38000	\$ 38721	\$ 174509	\$7000	\$ 1000	\$ 0	\$ 48525	\$ 363805	\$ 0
2000	\$ 49628	\$ 24150	\$ 44807	\$ 130680	\$10650	\$ 2500	\$ 0	\$ 56433	\$ 318848	\$ 0
1995	\$ 29950	\$ 47441	\$ 17695	\$ 81432	\$4526	\$ 255	\$ 0	\$ 22555	\$ 203854	\$ 0

Explanation of any anomalies:

1. Blank space means the information requested is not available.
2. A zero means that there are no funds that belong to that category.
3. The large increase in social justice expenditures after 2005 is due to an accounting change. After 2005, we began recording our portion of a social worker's salary in our social justice expense line. Previously that figure had been an off-budget item handled directly by the Trustees of the Parish Funds and was not run through our operating budget.

Current congregational life

Does the congregation have a mission -- not a mission statement, but a glowing coal at its center -- and if so, what is it?

There are strong commitments among different groups of congregants focused on religious explorations for children and youth, music, caring for one another, and social action. Each of these areas has a core of people who are passionate about them, and individuals sometimes dedicate themselves to more than one.

However, if there is a unifying strand among these areas, we have not articulated

it or adopted it, in word or action, as a “glowing coal” at our center. Our new minister may well aspire to helping us find that common thread and act on it.

Congregational strengths:

There is a prevailing sense of community at the core of First Parish and a strong commitment, led by the Caring Committee, to responding to personal needs of members in times of illness, tragedy, divorce, etc. Pastoral care to our community is a ministry that we all engage in - we don't leave it all to the minister.

Our religious explorations program serves our children well. It is a large draw for newcomers and has been for three decades. Our talented musicians and their contributions, not just to worship services, but to the life of the church and the Milton community as a whole, keep people coming back.

Congregants are also deeply involved in the life of the town as individuals, and they have a wide range of organizational skills that they share freely for the benefit of the parish.

Congregational challenges:

Reconciling our hopes with our finances:

Our perennial challenge is the contradiction between our vision (more staff, more programming and improvements to our physical plant) and our willingness to pay for it.

The relationship of the congregation to its tangible assets:

The ultimate use and disposition of our endowment, buildings, and silver form the most intractable challenge we face. All three have been characterized as both blessings and curses. Our Meetinghouse and its campus ground us in history, but its maintenance is complex, time consuming, and expensive. Our endowment has kept our buildings well maintained, underwritten our operating costs and saved us from financial catastrophe; but our annual budget drive has been raising only a bare half of what we need for our yearly operating expenses, necessitating a yearly draw-down from our endowment that will not be sustainable over the long term. Our silver is widely treasured for its historical significance, but some believe it would be put to better use by selling it to support programmatic efforts.

Membership retention and growth: Each year new members join us, but retention has too often been a challenge; so membership has not grown and

pledge income has leveled off.

Congregational diversity:

We are largely white, over 40, post-graduate educated, and we earn over \$100,000 a year. We are convinced that many in our community could find sustenance and comfort in Unitarian-Universalism and in our congregation, but we recognize our demographics may constitute a barrier to making First Parish a viable spiritual home for them. We have succeeded in improving accessibility to people with physical challenges, and we are certified as a Welcoming Congregation, but success at achieving racial and economic diversity has been more limited.

What congregational issues are likely to be most pressing within the next couple years:

Religious symbols:

Growth and finances are perennially the most pressing challenges, but the issue of religious symbolism in the Meetinghouse may rise to the surface early in the tenure of our new minister. Biblical inscriptions in gold leaf adorn the walls of the Meetinghouse, and there is a cross behind the pulpit. To some, these symbols have spiritual and historic value. To others, they are a weekly affront. Two settled ministers ago, different approaches to this issue were tested, but no resolution was reached, and an underlying disagreement continues to simmer. This observation is intended as a head's up, not as an admonition to take the issue on immediately upon arrival.

Social Action:

According to our survey, just over half of the congregation would like to see social action re-visioned and revamped to make it accessible to the largest proportion of the congregation and most impactful on the community. Some suggest we need to concentrate on taking care of each other before we can expand outward, while others feel that more risk-taking might propel the congregation out of a perceived inertia. Still others feel we could explore doing weekly, smaller actions at church that feel more “doable” in our daily lives.

Integrating CUUPS into congregational life:

The relationship between the congregation as a whole and our chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans could use some ministerial attention.

CUUPS is an active group in our Parish, but there is not much interaction between them and the larger congregation and not much effort to integrate the group into congregational life.

What congregational issues are likely to be most pressing over the next ten years:

Re-graying of the membership:

By the 1980s, the congregation had aged and there were few younger people present and engaged. The introduction of the Religious Education program reversed the trend, but now we are seeing the middle generation starting to decline as both children and parents disengage when they finish high school. This may be the specific form the membership retention challenge will take in the next ten years.

Building maintenance and expansion:

Our buildings will require ever more expensive repairs and upgrades over time. These expenses, which have been a challenge all along, are likely to become more acute and onerous in the next decade. If we are successful in addressing the membership retention problem, we may be called upon to expand. In that success lies a set of additional challenges.

What congregational issues may never be resolved?

Proper use of the endowment:

With the passage of time, different answers will be found to the question, “How can we use the endowment so that it blesses not just us today but the generations that follow as well?” Each new answer will require a struggle.

Membership retention: We know that First Parish is not alone with this issue. Across the country and across denominations, membership retention is a challenge. There are notable exceptions, but they are notable because they are exceptions.

To what degree does the congregation possess a dominant theology?

Based on the information gathered in our survey of the congregation, it is not possible to discern a dominant theology. Buddhism, Humanism, and Protestant Christianity are most often cited as faith traditions important to us. There is a sizable minority who cite earth-centered spirituality as important. 67% of us feel that the word “God” has meaning, and 87% are comfortable with God language in sermons and conversations.

Our most commonly shared religious belief is that the interconnectedness of all things grounds us in our spiritual lives. We engage in and enjoy a variety of spiritual practices including prayer, meditation, yoga, and connecting with the natural and creative world. But there is nothing that stands out that would allow us to categorize the congregation theologically as predominantly Christian or Humanist or Pagan. There is some of all of that and more. Our liturgy, however, tends to follow the Christian calendar and our order of worship is fairly traditionally Protestant, by practice.

Our covenant, adopted in 2010, expresses the beliefs that we share:

**In devotion to truth, searching along many spiritual paths,
We honor the living legacy of our faith in the human potential for goodness and
in the God of limitless love, in whom we are one.**

**We unite in faith,
To celebrate the sacred as it reveals itself within and among us;
To promote spiritual growth and to care for those in need;
To honor and protect the natural world, which inspires wonder and sustains life;
To walk together in peace, committed to justice and compassion in our world.**

Describe the role of music and the arts in the life of the congregation:

We love music - music of all kinds. Our historic pipe organ is magnificent, despite a recent infestation of ladybugs. We have a wonderful grand piano in the Meetinghouse, and a lovely, small gem of a pipe organ in the Children's Church. Our singers are highly skilled, and include both amateurs and professionals, paid with funds in our endowment restricted to music. The choir is valued as a chief contributor to worship.

Our musical tastes are promiscuous – high church liturgical to broad church protestant and rollicking gospel , from folk to jazz, rock to classical. If it can be hummed, strummed, sung or pounded, there’s almost always a part of the congregation who loves it. Hip hop, rap, and techno – not so much (yet?), but anything in the right context can be enjoyed.

However, a portion of the congregation believes that our exuberance does not break through often enough. Our survey revealed that many members seek a more diverse, participatory musical experience that complements and strengthens the worship theme, with less emphasis on performance. There is a strong desire to incorporate nontraditional music and draw on the rich resource of talent in our congregation as a way to further engage members in worship.

Our Meetinghouse and Parish Hall are joined by a long narrow “link”, the walls of which we use as a gallery for visual arts created by members and friends. Occasionally, we host parties with a good dose of dancing, and on at least one occasion in the last few years the choir spontaneously led the congregation in a conga line out the door at the end of the service. We can be a little stiff on the surface but sometimes the passion erupts.

Describe the religious education programs for children, youth and adults:

Religious exploration at First Parish is multi-faceted and provides opportunities for all age groups to explore a wide range of religious beliefs and practices while developing their own religious framework. Worship is a strong element, with regular intergenerational services in the Meetinghouse, and services for grades 1 - 12 held in our Children’s Church once a month. These services complement classes that provide age appropriate activities and themes.

The classes, though, are not your father’s or mother’s Sunday School classes. The Montessori method is highly influential and there’s virtually nothing in our religious exploration program that resembles more traditional classroom education. Curiosity is highly prized, and we encourage children of all ages to explore and probe and question in an atmosphere of respect.

Here is a summary of the curriculum:

Preschool through Grade 2 - Spirit Play, a Montessori-based curriculum designed to help children understand their Unitarian Universalist identities and begin to grapple with existential questions such as “Where do we come from” and “What happens when we die?”

Grade 2, Spring Semester - Passages, focuses on the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism and how children can incorporate them into their lives.

Grades 3 through 6 - Two groups of Small Group Ministry, an adaptation for children of Gail Forsyth-Vail’s “Small Group Ministry for Religious Education.”

Grades 7 and 8 - Junior Youth Group introduces our middle schoolers to the youth-group concept, with a focus on social action and faith formation.

Grades 9 through 12 - Youth Chat, a covenanted group that discusses current events and the challenges and triumphs of adolescence through an ethical and spiritual lens.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (Youth Group), activities focused on worship, leadership, community building, social action, learning, and youth-adult relationships facilitated by the Youth Advisor.

Grades 7 through 9 - Our Whole Lives (OWL) helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior.

Coming of Age, a guided time of discernment for youth making the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Religious development opportunities for adults include silent meditation and prayer twice a week, yoga, and CUUPS, and have included small group ministries in past years.

Other events are organized by the religious education committee, such as our annual Passover Seder dinner, holiday crafts, and Halloween party, cultivate multigenerational fellowship and respect.

Lay leadership

In practice, are responsibilities for governance widely shared or confined among relatively few members? Give some examples:

There is a strong core of lay leaders who weave in and out of leadership roles, and we have a good record of recruiting new members to committees and leadership positions (perhaps a little too aggressively). As in most active organizations, burn out is an issue, but those of us who stick with it have found that there is plenty of room for leadership sabbaticals. There are several people in key leadership positions today (including at least two of us on the Ministerial Search Committee) who at one time or another have announced that they would take a year off from committee work. Others have reduced their committee commitments but still remain engaged at a different level.

At one of our bridging meetings that took place before the search process officially began, there was a discussion of the asynchronous phases of church life: One member's energy and engagement waxes while another member's wanes. One leader needs a break, while another is just getting started. So the core is continuously replenished.

The makeup of the Ministerial Search Committee is an excellent example. Two of us have been around for 25 - 30 years, two for 10, and the newest has been attending for five years, and has been a member for less than one.

We do not, however, have standard processes for the “feeding and watering” of leaders. We struggle with good practices for leadership development, though there were strategic attempts made under our last settled minister’s guidance to identify and grow new leaders. Mentoring happens in one-offs, with no specific transitional structure, and burnout has led to the departure of some valuable members of our community.

Describe the process you used to complete this form:

By its nature, this form requires a highly collaborative process. We began by choosing a coordinator - during our search committee retreat - who analyzed the questions to determine what person(s) or method(s) would best provide the information requested in each one.

Sometimes, the process was straightforward: Ask the treasurer, the office staff, or the chair of various committees, refer to archived documents. Most questions, though, required more effort.

Our congregational survey provided a wealth of data but the committee had the job of analyzing it, with one person drafting an initial summary that was circulated to the rest of the committee for comment and revision. Before being finalized, the analysis was tested against conclusions drawn from a series of bridging discussions that had been held in the spring prior to the appointment of the search committee.

The analysis was further enriched by discussions held during our Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop and follow-up cottage meetings. The final analysis incorporated into the Congregational Record is based on consensus of the search committee. Laura Graham, our UUA settlement consultant, reviewed and recommended emendations. The search committee then finalized and published it. The Congregational Record will be shared with the congregation.

Committees

Name the committees that have recently had the greatest success:

Religious Exploration, Membership, Hospitality and Caring

Name the committees that have recently had the least success:

Social Action

This committee has dedicated individuals on it who try to keep social action initiatives going, but for a time there was no one able to chair the committee.

Despite that, our fair trade holiday sale, dinners at a homeless shelter, and

participation in other activities have continued, sometimes on a reduced scale. Our youth have also engaged in a number of social action projects independently of the social action committee, and continue to be congregational leaders in this arena.

Major financial support

List the dollar amounts of the ten largest operating pledges received in the most recently completed fiscal year:

\$13,500

\$10,000

\$ 7,500

\$ 7,000

\$ 6,500

\$ 5,800

\$ 5,500

\$ 5,200

\$ 5,000

\$ 4,865

Give the dates of the last two capital fund drives, and the funds raised (a) by contribution and (b) by debt:

In the church year of 2014 - 2015, we had to make major repairs to our organ, replacing the bellows mechanism in the basement of the Meetinghouse. The cost was \$19,000, which was covered by budgeted building maintenance funds augmented with individual restricted contributions. No debt was incurred.

In 2005, we made extensive renovations to improve accessibility throughout the campus. We had installed an external ramp in the 1990s, but there were stairs from the Meetinghouse to the Link that leads to the Parish Hall. To get from the Meetinghouse to the Parish Hall in a wheelchair it was necessary to go outside. We installed a lift adjacent to the stairs so that wheelchairs could pass inside. At the same time, we took two inaccessible bathrooms and converted them into a single accessible women's bathroom and converted an office/storage space into an accessible men's bathroom. We removed some pews in the front of the Meetinghouse and reconfigured some in the rear so that it would be possible to attend church in a wheelchair and sit with family and companions without blocking the aisles. We enlarged the platform at the front of the Meetinghouse and built a ramp to it. We installed a safety outline in blonde wood on the perimeter of the walnut-stained platform. The cost of these improvements was over \$172,000 most of which was covered by individual and foundation donations for the purpose. The balance was covered with budgeted maintenance funds and

a special drawdown from the endowment.

We should mention that in the late 1990s our steeple had to be removed due to structural deficiencies that began in the basement and continued throughout the structure. The steeple sat on our front lawn for two years while substructural repairs were done. The \$450,000 cost was covered entirely by the endowment.

What is the condition of the church buildings, and what funds may need to be raised in the future?

The current Meetinghouse, which is the fourth, was dedicated in 1788. In 1834 it was turned from facing west to facing south.

There were additional repairs and renovations up through 1896, and during that period the interior was redesigned in its current Greek Revival style. It has remained unchanged except for necessary repairs and the accessibility work described above for over a century.

The buildings have been well maintained by a dedicated committee. Over a decade ago, we commissioned a study that came to be known as the Fogarty Report that still guides our care of the buildings.

Even though financial constraints have kept us from completing all maintenance on the recommended schedule, the Building and Grounds Committee has done an excellent job of prioritizing tasks and scheduling them within our financial means. The entire campus is on a regular painting schedule. A good deal of rewiring was done during the last decade. As a result of an energy audit, an effort has been made to conserve energy with more efficient light bulbs and timers on thermostats.

Within the last year, we have resurfaced our parking lots, and plans are underway to convert from our oil furnace to natural gas. \$100,000 was allocated from the endowment to cover the cost of the parking lots and furnace conversion.

Ministry

Describe the process by which the minister will be called:

We are following the basic script provided by the UUA, but we assume that's not what this question is getting at. We did add a step at the beginning that is not part of the UUA plan: In the fall of 2014, before the search committee was chosen, the Parish Committee initiated a series of "bridging discussions" leading to a report that provided a baseline of opinion for the search committee to refer to as it has worked its way through the survey, the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop, and now the Congregational Record. The "bridging discussions" also

helped prepare the congregation for the search and produced a mindset concerning the importance of the congregation in the process. We also added a week of “cottage discussions” following the BCT workshop to bring us full circle and to see how opinions may have changed during the last year. For its part, the search committee has viewed all of these components as means for us to deeply incorporate community perspectives into our own thought processes so we can truly assess candidates through a community lens - beyond each of our own individual perspectives.

Once we receive ministerial packets from interested candidates, we will review them and winnow our candidate list to a manageable number. The remaining candidates will be interviewed via phone or skype and a maximum of four will be selected to visit at neutral pulpits.

We will reach out to our chosen candidate in April, 2016. If the candidate accepts our offer, the terms of agreement will be settled. The candidate and his/her family will then come to First Parish for a week, meet parishioners and staff, and present two consecutive Sunday Services. Following the second service, we will hold an all-Parish meeting where a vote to call the candidate will be taken.

Describe the process by which the Ministerial Search Committee (or its equivalent) was chosen:

All members of the congregation were given the opportunity to nominate four members to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee. This part of the process was restricted in that only members could nominate or be nominated. The 12 people with the highest number of nominations became the pool of candidates. Members then voted for up to four of these nominees and the four top vote recipients were chosen for the committee. The Parish Committee then chose three additional members from among the original 12, with an eye to having a range of skills, perspectives, ages, etc., on the committee. Which of the nominees were elected and which were chosen by the Parish Committee is information confidentially held by the Parish Committee alone.

Ministerial skills and enthusiasms most needed by the congregation:

4 -Crucial 3 -Significant 2 -Modest 1 -Of less consequence

1 Administration

3 Adult religious education

3 Children's religious education

1 Committee work

4 Community building

1 Denominational activities

- 2 Facilitation
- 2 Stewardship
- 1 Home visitation
- 1 Hospital calling
- 3 Leadership Development
- 2 Membership growth
- 1 Music & liturgical arts
- 1 Personal counseling
- 4 Preaching
- 1 Scholarship
- 3 Social action
- 4 Spiritual guidance
- 3 Staff relations
- 4 Worship
- 1 Youth work

Assess the capacity of the congregation to exercise forbearance and nurture in assisting a minister's development:

Over the last decade, our congregation sponsored several successful ministerial internships that speak to our enthusiasm for nurturing ministers and to the affection we can develop for them. We can be highly supportive of both the personal and professional needs of our minister. We have a wealth of wide ranging experience and access to resources that we gladly share, and we respond positively to being asked for help, advice and support.

The congregation and its committees can be demanding at times, with a lack of understanding of the overall demands we are making on our minister. We therefore seek a minister who is experienced in leading communities with broad-ranging aims and goals, and who is adept at communicating his or her needs effectively, so that we may better support the minister in balancing his or her needs with those of the community.

What expectations, however silent, may there be about the minister's family and personal life?

There is a hope that the minister's personal life will support a stable tenure and that family or personal matters will be dealt with in a manner that will not destabilize the congregation.

Describe the worst mistake your new minister could make:

Diagnosing problems and trying to implement solutions without getting to know the congregation first. We need a minister who listens and watches before acting.

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