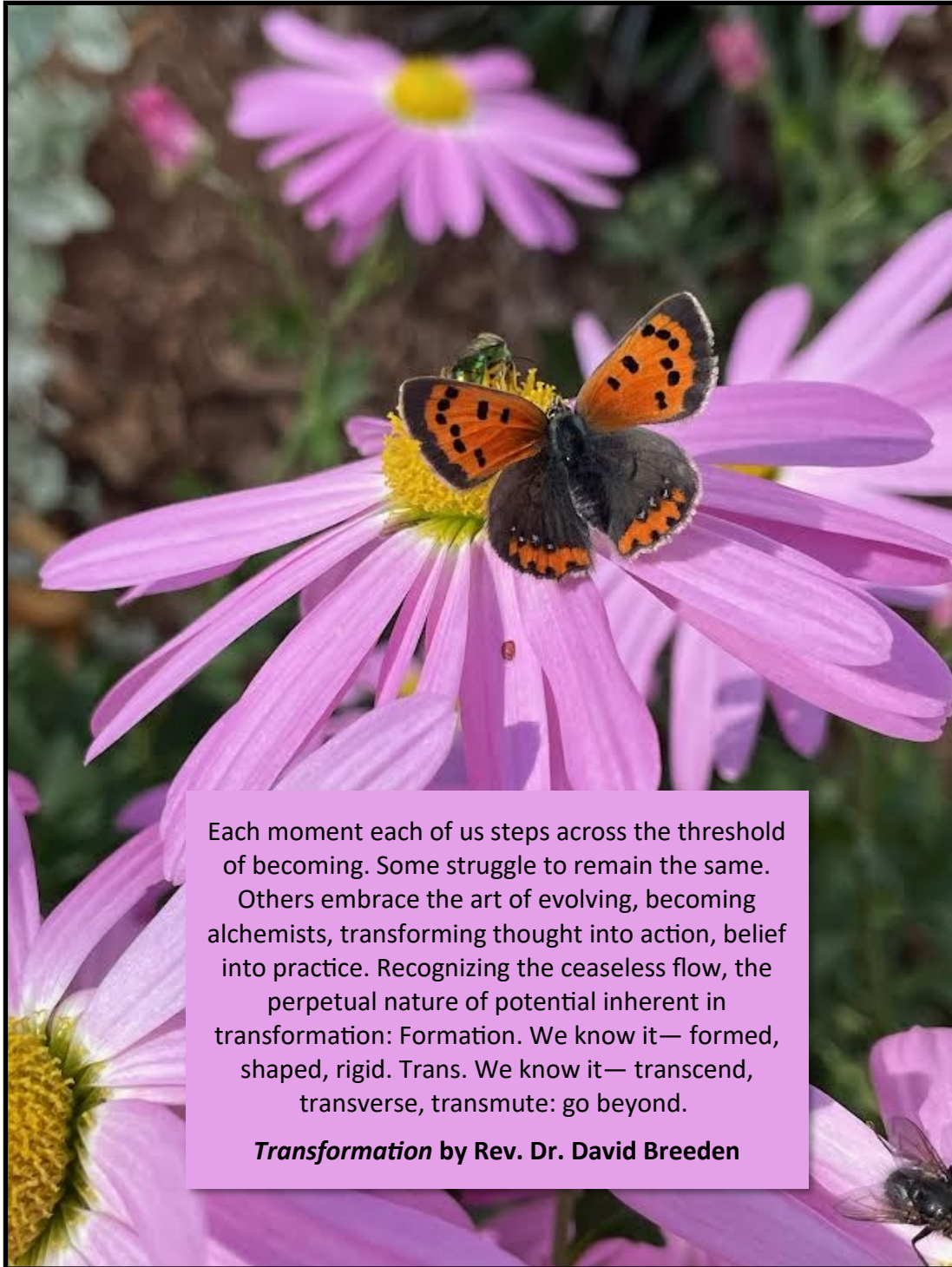


First Parish Brewster Unitarian Universalist

2024 Spring Quarterly



Each moment each of us steps across the threshold of becoming. Some struggle to remain the same. Others embrace the art of evolving, becoming alchemists, transforming thought into action, belief into practice. Recognizing the ceaseless flow, the perpetual nature of potential inherent in transformation: Formation. We know it— formed, shaped, rigid. Trans. We know it— transcend, transverse, transmute: go beyond.

Transformation by Rev. Dr. David Breeden

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Individual contact info can be found in Breeze, the member directory or by contacting the church office by emailing cove@firstparishbrewster.org or calling 508-896-5577.



Transition Team

The Transition Team supports the work of our Interim Minister and paves the way for the Search Committee. We are now meeting about two times a month and will until June. Rev. Kaaren arrived in August and immediately, in collaboration with Twinks and about 60 volunteers, reimagined Fellowship Hall with tremendous creativity and energy. What a transformed and beautiful space for our CYM program!

Next Rev. Kaaren conducted a SWOT Analysis (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats) to help her and us get a jump start on understanding our strengths and weaknesses. She then turned her attention to our financial deficit gathering church leaders and interested congregants asking them to think big with her and increase revenue in 3 areas including: increased Thrift Store hours, UU Vacation Homes, and the tree house project. These groups are all working and taking next steps. Much of Rev. Kaaren's work in these first 6 months has been in careful observation of boards, committees, teams and groups at First Parish Brewster to see how she can best serve us and help position us to be as strong as we possibly can as we head into search. She is working with the Board, Personnel, Membership, Social Justice, and Communications. The Transition Team is now reconstructing the history of First Parish Brewster to know where we've been so we can, along with the congregation, figure out where we are going.

Susan Smith (Chair), Barb Draper, Elenita Muniz, Chuck Ross, David Sutherland and Rev. Kaaren Anderson.

Minister's Musing

When my kids were little we lived next door to my daughter Solveig's best friend. Solveig and Julia were thick as thieves, in and out of each other's houses daily, all through elementary, middle and high school.

Julia had a brother with Autism, and at times, her brother would come over to our house upset, often crying and yelling. If you were working at home, he'd want you to stop work, so he could rest his head in your lap. And with his head in your lap, he'd talk, we'd listen and eventually he'd calm down. Julia's mom, would call and ask "Is Steven over there?" "Yup, he is, no worries." After a while, once mellowed, we'd walk him back to his house. As he got older, he'd walk back on his own accord.

For Julia, she needed a break sometimes from this fabulous but complicated brother of hers, so our house became a respite of sorts. After a couple of years of being at our house almost every day, she'd open the big sliding glass door without knocking and say with great enthusiasm:

"My Peoples! Where are my Peoples!?! " And one of her "Peoples" would appear. Usually Solveig but sometimes one of my other kids or Scott and I.

She walked in like that at all times of the day for another ten years, yelling, "Hello, my Peoples, Where are my Peoples!" Every time.

I've always loved that. My Peoples.

Julia taught me to identify for myself when I've made that jump from –people I am in community with–to "My peoples!" After seven months with you, indeed you are "My peoples!" I'm grateful to so many of you for your graciousness and generosity of spirit that has made this so. I especially love how you do the same to new people walking in the door. You let them know, they are your peoples!

It's a particular gift that not all congregations hold. And yet you do. It's one of the many wonderful thing this congregation excels at.

Part of my work with you is to decipher and explore some of the fault lines that if dealt with, could help heal some past discord and offer a clearer path forward with a settled minister. There are some wonderful leaders on many committee's that are digging in to revise, revamp or redo policies and procedures, or behaviors and patterns that if addressed, will help this congregation exponentially.

There is much to celebrate here, and yes, some tweaks worth acting on. But every congregation has their growing edges. In the end, I'm confident you will attract and keep a minister that will love you fiercely, and remind you of your collective call.



In the meantime, for the next 1.5 years, You've got me. My Peoples.

In gratitude and love,

Rev. Kaaren



2024-2025 Annual Pledge Commitment Hard Hats and Life Preservers



The Stewardship Pledge Drive got off to a robust start this year. We started this year's canvas earlier than years past and have received many pledge commitments thus far. We can announce that many within our church community have increased their pledges over last year! If you have not yet submitted your pledge commitment, we ask that you do so this month. Therefore, we are asking if all members if they can increase their yearly pledges to cover our growing operating expenses. We thank you all for your support and commitment to FPBUU.

In gratitude - The Stewardship Committee

Administration and Finance Ministries

Currently, I am leading a book discussion on *Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil* by Terasa Cooley with the Communications Office Volunteers Extraordinaire, aka the COVE Team. I was interested in this book not because I felt FPBUU was a congregation in turmoil, but because I was interested in exploring this topic when we weren't dealing with a major issue. My hope was to build up our collective willingness to engage with conflict as a growth opportunity for our community, instead of something to avoid at all costs. I wanted to explore what had and hadn't worked for other congregations in order to create a potential FPBUU toolbox of sorts. Some of the COVE members were less than enthusiastic about the book, yet each month we have continued on together. We are about half way through the book and getting some good tips for transforming conflict. But the thing that inspires me the most is how honest the individual shares have been. We are learning about each other by listening to each other; we are letting others know ourselves by speaking up. Although it is okay for anyone to pass, it's always better when everyone shares their perspective. This process reminds me that we are more than the sum of our parts; truly better together.



This spring, the office is going to begin a Communications Audit. It will begin with a survey to kick off the conversation. This is the last Quarterly Angle in this format that we will be doing. It's time to create something new, and we need your help! Let us know what you want to hear about, how often and how you want it sent to you. The survey results will determine our next steps, and we hope that you will join us in creating fun, engaging and meaningful communications content.

Karena Stroh,
Administration and Finance Director

Music Ministries

FPBUU Music Feeling Joyous with Dan Anthony on our Staff

We are so fortunate that in the autumn of 2023, Dan Anthony joined the FPBUU music-making staff. In addition to accompanying the FPBUU Choir, he also plays trumpet, trombone, sings and conducts on occasion. Dan teaches music full time at Nauset High School and sings in the Cape Cod Surftones with his father. As a music teacher and mentor, Dan has been an inspiration to the offspring of some of our very own church members. You can read a fabulous article about his teaching [here](#). With his skills, upbeat personality, can-do attitude and a great sense of humor, Dan is an invaluable addition to our music team, and we are incredibly lucky to have him!



Music Sunday will be Sunday, May 5 and we are starting to shape the service. Stay attuned...

Handpans are Handpanning

If you came to *Music Sunday* in April 2023, or to the summer *Open Music Gathering* that featured this instrument, then you might know what it is and what it looks and sounds like. Handpans are becoming more popular and springing up especially in meditative, yoga and spiritual communities because of their unique resonances, sonorities and overtones. Many people find the handpan to have a calming effect, and some use it as a part of their spiritual practice. Also called the hang drum, its origins are relatively recent. Over a period of years of research, a hangdrum builder (also called steel drum) and his partner experimented with turning the steel drum inside out and making it spherical, which resulted in the first handpan in the year 2000. You can read more about the instrument's extensive history [here](#). A small group has started gathering at FPBUU and making music, learning how to play this alluring instrument together, which is very fun!



Kaeza Fearn, Music Director



Welcome to the Leadership Nominating Committee!

Ever wonder how our congregation finds such talented leadership? Well, it's due to the thoughtful, creative, collective, collaborative work of the Leadership Nominating Committee. This Committee is comprised of 6 church members who seek the best individuals for each specific position that needs to be filled. Members of the LNC are elected each year at the Annual Meeting in June. Members serve for three years and cycle off two per year, allowing for a continuity of best practice and allowing recently elected members to learn from more seasoned members of the Committee.

The work is always exciting as so many great people are considered. It also becomes a "covenant" as we share ideas and suggestions, always seeking the best representative church leadership body. Over these past many years, our Board of Trustees and the Endowment Board have charted us through some rough seas, and here we are today, growing and making a difference in our community. Serving this congregation is an honor. It is how we give back for all the comfort, wisdom, and spiritual sustenance that we crave.

Please take a few minutes and consider what you are willing to do to hold our faith community in health and sustainability. Thank you to all for being here and walking amongst us.

Jim Hild, Debbi Klein, Paula Lieb, Margaret Rice Moir, Frank Re, Janet Treanor

From the Board of Trustees

Notes From the Board of Trustees

“Energy” is the word I’ve heard most at First Parish Brewster since the last Quarterly Angle appeared on September 11 of last year. After some (but not too much) well-earned rest over the Summer, committees were re-energized and have been hard at work (not just meeting). Concerts, speaker programs, art installations, social justice actions – they are all happening. Work on our buildings and grounds, which never takes a rest, presses forward. Sunday Services are electrifying and religious education, in its amazingly refurbished quarters, is thriving. Fundraising and our other financial ministries are hard at work to secure a sound future for First Parish.

As I have previously said, perhaps our single greatest issue as we go into the search for our next settled minister will be how to address the crises in availability and cost of housing on Cape Cod. To address that, during the Fall the Board of Trustees authorized the formation of a Minister Housing Taskforce. That taskforce has three working groups focusing on the following alternatives which we will be considering:

- 1) Converting either the Winslow House or Barn to housing
- 2) Acquiring off-site housing,
- 3) Creating a fund to assist a Minister in purchasing or leasing their own home

Members of each working group have been splitting up the tasks of determining the pros and cons of their group’s respective approach to housing.



Trustees: (Left to right) Carol Yerby, Karen, Gail Webb, John Kielb, Liz Cable, Jim Lieb, Diane Wilcox, Leslie Rennie-Hill

Board of Trustees 2023-2024

Jim Lieb, President
Gail Webb, President-Elect
Carol Yerby, Past President
Karen Witting, Treasurer
Irie Mullen, Clerk
Members-At-Large:
Liz Cable
John Kielb
Leslie Rennie-Hill
Diane Willcox

In addition, the Board authorized the formation of a Strategic Planning Committee, to focus on the congregation’s major long-term goals, in coordination with the Minister Housing Taskforce which will be focusing on that one narrow goal. The intention is to develop a three-year revolving plan, to be reviewed at the end of each year and then revised (based on results and changing goals and needs) and extended out for a new 3-year period. Initial work has begun, with the intention of doing much legwork over the next 16 months in order to be able to put together a formal plan in conjunction with the arrival of our next settled minister.

The work of both the Minister Housing Taskforce and the Strategic Planning Committee will, of course, be subject to approval by the congregation of the proposals formulated by the Taskforce and Committee.

Jim Lieb, President of the Board of Trustees

FUNdraising Committee

Spring is just around the corner and that means we are starting to plan for our largest annual Fundraiser of the year – THE SPRING FESTIVAL!!

It is never too early to start planning for FPBUU's largest FUNdraising event of the year! The Spring Festival consists of our week long, on-line auction and we finish off our activities with an in-person festival featuring Bake Shop, Gift Shop, and Plant & Garden Sale. (Rand Burkert has suggested, with a mild winter, it's not too early to start splitting plantings in your garden!) . How can you help make this yearly event a success? Think about wonderful offerings you can donate to the auction. Items featured in our catalog range from dinner events to sign up for, gift cards to many local merchants and restaurants, and artwork, to name a few. How about baking your favorite items for the bake sale?



Mark your calendar for the start of the on-line auction on Saturday, May 11th, and the in-person SRING FESTIVAL, open to the public, is scheduled for Sunday, May 19th.

Other happenings to look for this Spring Season –



When the weather starts to turn a bit warmer, we hope to schedule a second "AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE BRUNCH" event. This past fall three members' homes created a bountiful spread of brunch delicacies for all food specifications (veggie options, gluten free offerings, etc). This was such a successful sellout event many people have asked us to repeat the event. Keep your eyes open as we will work on the best Sunday to schedule our second After Sunday Service Brunch!

We are always looking for great ways to bring our community together while supporting FPB. If you are a creative soul that likes to brainstorm with others and plan events, we would love to have you join us; no experience necessary and no idea turned away!

FUNdraising Committee – Rand Burkert, Barb Draper, Susan Flaws, Judy Jollett, Vicki Kendziorski, Debbi Klein, Patsy Roberts, Rog Smith, Carol Yerby

UU Vacation Homes: Share Your Blessing

UU Vacation Homes is one of the three revenue generating ideas suggested by Rev Kaaren. Working in partnership with WeNeedaVacation.com, we are beginning to approach home owners who might be willing to list their home for rent for a few weeks in the summer and donate a portion of funds received to First Parish Brewster. We have developed a flier and are offering coaching, logistical support, and a free listing on the WeNeedaVacation website.



Susan Smith, Jeff Talmadge, Joan Talmadge and Kris Yerby

Lifespan Religious Education Ministries



This June at our General Assembly we will vote on the proposed changes to Article 2 of the Unitarian Universalist Association's bylaws. This will be a major transformation, moving away from the 7(8) principles and replacing them with six values with love at the center. In short, our bylaws will reflect HOW we are Unitarian Universalists instead of WHY we are Unitarian Universalists, centering love in all we do.

This year in our grade-school CYM (Children and Youth Ministries), we have been celebrating the gifts that each of these values will bring to our church and putting them into action, through making and serving stone soup, making care packages for members who are homebound or in need of some love, and filling gratitude jars.

The proposed bylaw changes are asking us to grow and change, to transform how we practice UUism out loud. They are calling us to be the best we can be, to put our values into action, and at the heart of it all, to be there for each other, hold each other in community, and to love the heck out of the world. This moment has all the potential to be a pivotal moment in our history - if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it.

Twinks Hastings, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Membership Update

During the fall and winter, the Membership Committee focused with Rev. Kaaren on creating a more meaningful path to membership. Our new process starts with UU101, a short monthly post-service session where we meet visitors, listen to their stories/why they came and share the next steps to membership. Newcomers are also invited to take a three-class "Starting Point" course with Rev. Kaaren where participants explore Unitarian Universalism in a small group through the lens of our individual theological journeys; the journey/history of UU; and our journey together. Next, in a UU 201 session after a Sunday service, we go over the privileges and responsibilities of membership, including details about pledging. Soon after, those who are ready, make a pledge of record and sign the Membership Book in the presence of the minister.

Since November, we have had two groups complete the Starting Point course to rave reviews from participants! On February 18 we held a UU201 session prior to a Membership Book signing on February 25. We will introduce all new members at a New Member Celebration on Sunday, May 19. A new member reception will be held during the summer.



If you are a newcomer and interested in learning more, UU101s will take place on Sundays, March 3 and April 14 after the service in the library. If you are interested in taking the next Starting Point course on Mondays, April 15, 22 and 29 from 4:00 to 6:00 in the Parish Room, please contact Paula Lieb. Childcare can be arranged for any parents interested in participating.

Summer's Not Over at FPB 2024

There was overwhelmingly positive feedback from kids, parents and FPB volunteers about last summer's SNO@UU program, as well as significant revenue generated for the congregation. So, with loads of excitement and momentum, we are embarking on the second year of programming during the "forgotten weeks" at the end of August. It is during this time that the need for childcare options is greatest. Last year, 56 volunteers made SNO@UU the success it was. This year, we aim to harness that same energy and creativity and ask that you join the fun! Please contact Laura Gill if you'd like to be involved in this environmental and social justice-themed endeavor, whose mission it is to offer an affordable and enriching experience to the children of Cape Cod. Everyone is welcome!



Financial Futures Tiger Team

About a year and a half ago, the executive team of the Board circled up to brainstorm ways our congregation could increase revenue at First Parish Brewster. Our consultant Barry Finkelstein had stressed to us that our beautiful campus, a terrific resource, was underutilized. Carol dubbed this emerging group the Tiger Team. Soon the Tiger Team split into smaller cohorts. One partnered with Twinks and CYM, developing **SNO@UU**, Summer's Not Over at UU, our two week summer program. Besides fulfilling a wonderful mission of providing desperately needed childcare in late August, offering faith-based programming for kids, and involving about 60 volunteers, the net income was in excess of \$13,000 in 2023. We were able to offer generous scholarships and keep expenses low. Under Kris Yerby's leadership, an **Energy Group** formed and has done research into non-traditional revenue generating opportunities for churches. Eversource now has our application for the possibility of placing the latest generation of battery technology to provide efficiency and resiliency to the electric grid. There would be no upfront costs to the church and an estimated revenue to the church in the range of \$20,000 per year. The **Grants Group** continues to explore grants from many sources. We have written and been awarded 6 grants so far in 2023 and 2024 for the Meetinghouse Speaker Series from town Cultural Councils and Cape Cod 5. Over the past 6 months, a **Rental Group** has been enhancing the property on both sides of the road and slowly new tenants have been signing leases. A group has been working on the rental pages on our website, concentrating on the wedding and events pages. **Meetinghouse Motors** was launched and we received our first truck donation.



Brewster Thrift Store is Gearing up for a Successful Spring and Summer

Everyone at the Thrift Store is excitedly waiting for the busy months ahead, and we are gearing up for a successful spring and summer. If you have thought about volunteering at the Thrift Store, the warm weather season is the perfect time to lend a hand! We are going to extend our hours. Please email me at celine@firstparishbrewster.org and we can get you started!

We are accepting donations of spring and summer clothing and have stopped taking winter clothing. Donation days are Wednesday & Friday, and we ask that you keep your donations at the three-bag or box limit. Clothing should be laundered prior to drop off. More donation guidelines can be found at www.brewsterthriftstore.org lastly, please stop by. We would love to see you!

Celine Crook, Thrift Store Manager



Women's Circle Alliance

Our Women's Circle Alliance has had several events this season that have brought both church members as well as friends to our monthly Wednesday events.



Here are our upcoming programs that just might pique your interest:

- - **April - Alzheimer's Support Group** - Dr Molly Purdue
- - **May - Remember WILPF?** - Elenita Muniz
- **June - Picnic at Drummer Boy Park**

Coordinating collations for memorial services has been one of the service responsibilities of our group. We offer a warm inviting space with refreshments and emotional comfort for the grieving friends and family.

The Alliance has been around since the 1800's. Please come and join us in 2024 as we visit with each other monthly, usually in our FPBUU Parish Room. Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of every month. We gather at 1 pm for refreshments and socializing, with our programs starting at 1:30 and ending around 2:30ish. Remember to check out the FPB Weekly Angle. We try posting the program information for two weeks before that 2nd Wednesday meeting. We hope to see you soon!

For more information, and/or to suggest an idea for a presenter or presentation, please feel free to contact any of us below. We can all be found in our FPBUU online directory called Breeze.

Hope to see you soon! Contact Sue Bowser, Julia Enroth, Linda Hladek, Betty Pickering, Suzanne Sullivan, Carol Anne Yeaple, or any of our other members!

From the Endowment Board

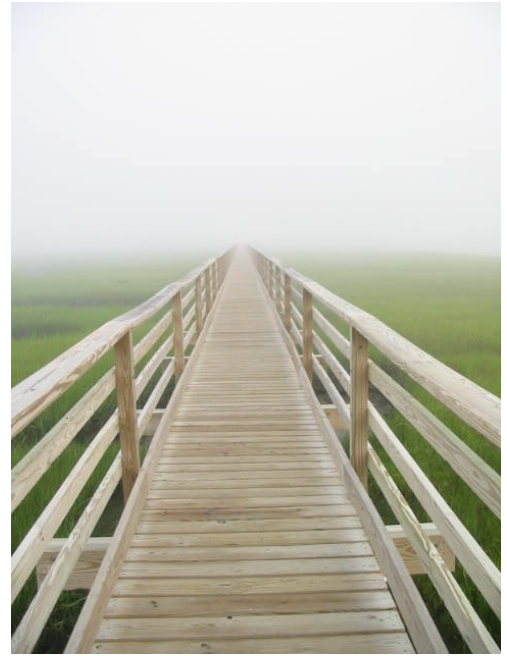
The Endowment Board can distribute up to \$59,067 in the current fiscal year. To date we have contributed \$10,000 toward our UUA dues, funded many building projects including among others, the steeple restoration, Barn rot and Parish Hall ramp repairs, CYM's revitalization of Fellowship Hall, and pew changes. In addition, we have covered the Interim Minister's moving expenses and the CYM OWL retreat.

As of December 31, 2023, the value of the Endowment Fund was \$1,273,595. The Endowment Board may distribute up to 5% (\$63,680) for projects in FY 24-25 as allowed under the First Parish Brewster By-laws.

All this is possible because of the many gifts and bequests we have received over the years.

*We drink from the well that was dug for us by our spiritual ancestors.
Let us replenish the well for those who follow.*

Endowment Board: Linda Bailey-Davies, Susan Flaws (Chair), Howard Hayes, Barry Powers (Recording Secretary) and Topper Roth (Financial Secretary).



Did you know...?

A quiz about our FPBUU campus from Building Maintenance Committee

1. How old is the Brewster Meeting House?
(a) 200 years (b) 79 years (c) 189 years (d) 323 years
 2. When was the first church constructed on this site?
(a) 1620 (b) 1700 (c) 1834 (d) 1875
 3. How many buildings does FPB own? What are they called?
 4. What was the tenure of our longest-serving minister?
(a) 55 years (b) 22 years (c) 46 years (d) 7 years
- Extra credit: what was his name?
5. Two of our buildings are post-and-beam style construction. Which ones?
 6. How much did we spend restoring the Meeting House?
(a) \$2 million (b) \$786,000 (c) \$1.6 million (d) \$1.2 million
 7. True or false: The steeple of this church has always been painted white.
_____ True _____ False
 8. How much did we spend last fiscal year (2022-23) on building maintenance?
(a) \$34,350 (b) \$15,700 (c) \$50,000 (d) \$64,600

**Answers will be published in the Weekly Angle.



Food & Flowers, Flowers & Food!

Sunday morning, beautiful flowers in the Sanctuary bring the blessings of nature right inside to us. And everyone loves Coffee Hour, a special time in the week to visit with each other and welcome our visitors. Food is a part of our complete welcome. Please sign up, maybe together with a friend, on the two boards in the Parish Room for Food and Flowers, Flowers and Food!



Prayer Shawl Ministry

A long-standing committee here at First Parish Brewster, the Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to be small but mighty. We are a group of about half dozen knitters and crocheters who meet monthly at the Winslow house to work together. We also carry on our shawl making at home and have shawls available, should the need come up. If you know of someone in need of some comfort at a difficult time or just a warm and cozy shawl, that was made with love and blessed by our members, please let one of our Prayer Shawl Committee members know. Or you can contact Tavia Ossala or Rev. Kaaren.

We meet the third Friday of every month at 10:30 am in the living room at Winslow House, and we welcome anyone to join us.

Patrice Amos (Chair) , Diane Heart, Denise Litz-Walters, Rosemary Moeller, Marietta Nilson and Karen Ross



Marietta Nilson

Building a Bigger Table Communications Team

Building a Bigger Table Update

SAVE THE DATE: April 6th for a unique concert by **Pihcintu Multinational Girl's Chorus**, "Voices for the Voiceless." Here's the chorus' website: pihcintu.org This performance is part of Building A Bigger Table's work in support of refugees, migrants, and asylees.

Saturday, April 6th, 7pm at Brewster Baptist Church

Building a Bigger Table current efforts have revolved around about 125 people living in a motel in South Yarmouth. Several BBT members have helped them also with language classes and knitting lessons. Work permits are in process. Recipients are grateful for the many donations of suitcases.

Meetinghouse Gallery

In collaboration with Nauset Interfaith, this fall we mounted moving photographs and stories on loan from the Family Diversity Project in two separate exhibits. In January and February, the Meetinghouse Gallery has featured the stunning works of Julia Cumes and her exhibit Trans(Formation), featuring the portraits and stories of 18 trans people on Cape Cod. Moving into the spring, we hope to focus on art and poetry from within our First Parish community. Please contact us if you are interested.

Laura Gill, Susan Smith, Joan Talmadge, Sue Trask and Mary Wallace.

Meetinghouse Speaker Series Voices of Cape Cod

Since January 2023, we have been presenting speakers here each month at the Meetinghouse. We have been centering voices of Black and Indigenous People, of marginalized people, and of trans people in our midst. We have not heard enough of these voices. We must work harder to dismantle racism and oppression in ourselves and in others. Next events include:

April 28, 2pm "Love Abides: Reinventing commitment in LGBTQ relationships"- Maureen Osborne & Rick Koonce

May 5, 2pm Erica Tso Haidas "Unerasd: Asians in America and the Fight for Racial Justice"

Disability Justice & Inclusion Committee

The Disability Justice & Inclusion Committee seeks to improve accessibility and inclusion for disabled folks in FPB worship, activities, and buildings. The DJIC is a new and emerging committee that seeks new members, including disabled people and non-disabled allies, and our meetings seek to meet the access needs of all involved. Our focus is to increase access and inclusion at FPB by identifying and publicizing our existing resources, determining our disabled congregants' unmet access needs and working to address them as budgets and creativity allow, and educating the congregation to reduce personal and structural ableism in FPB interactions. This fall and winter, after receiving feedback from many folks who were having trouble hearing aspects of our worship services, we worked with Rev. Kaaren and staff to assess the existing hearing-assistance system in the Sanctuary, and took a field trip to "test drive" replacement hearing technology options in use at other religious communities. We are happy that a fix will be rolled out soon as part of a Sanctuary audio upgrade! Moving forward, we plan to survey the congregation about individual experiences with disability in the FPB environment, catalog our current access resources, and better disseminate those existing resources by highlighting them in our physical and electronic congregation spaces. We invite anyone interested in taking on discrete projects within that work, or participating intermittently as they are available. Please contact Irie Mullin (Chair) if you are interested in joining our work!



From the Treasurer

The Finance Committee has been busy in the past months improving communication regarding financial activities and preparing for the development of next year's budget.

A new Webpage called "Financial Information" is available on fpbuu.org which pulls together Financial Information of interest to the congregation. It includes things like the (a) charge to the Finance Committee, (b) the list of members of the Finance Committee (c) Financial Reports (d) Past pledging information and more. To find this page look under Governance.

The Mid-Year State of the Church and Financial Review was after church on February 18th. Our income this year is strong, and our expenses are as expected, so we are confident we will meet or do better than the budget this year. The key challenges as we continue to build our community are financial sustainability, minister and staff housing, maintaining our buildings and ensuring our staff are paid equitably. These are all significant challenges but with the enthusiasm and participation of many we see high hopes for our future.

The material presented during this review is available from the "Financial Information" page, follow the Monthly Financial Reports link and look for "2024 02 FPBUU-6month-report.pdf".

We now begin building the Budget for the next fiscal year, July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The first step of building a budget is the pledge campaign and collection of budget requests. Using the results of these initiatives and income and expense information gathered throughout the year, we start building the budget and understanding, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, what it will take to have a balanced budget. Once the Board of Trustees approves the budget it is presented to the congregation at an informational session on June 2 and voted at the Annual Meeting on June 9.

Karen Witting, Treasurer of Board of Trustees & Chair of Finance Committee

Covenant Groups – A Program of Small Group Ministry

We are off and running in 2024, with seven groups led by 14 facilitators. Some of us meet in person, some are all-Zoom, and we also utilize a hybrid option for snowbirds and anybody else who cannot attend live. Many of us find that is so good to be together again in person after the pandemic. So far, the array of options for attending a monthly covenant group has worked very well.



Within a framework of monthly church-wide topics furnished by the "Soul Matters" curriculum, the use of suggested focus questions and spiritual exercises, and the practice of "deep listening," our group members have engaged in meaningful contemplation of worthwhile subjects. In our final 3 months of March, April and May, we will be diving into the following values of our liberal faith: "Transformation," "Interdependence," and "Pluralism."

Facilitators meet monthly and conduct a separate "mini-group" to preview the following month's topic and to engage in our own bonding. They have consistently reported that their group members have jumped in with both feet, "going deep" within the safety of our covenant based sessions. Each group has also engaged in providing hospitality for a Sunday service as part of our service commitment.

To read a more detailed program description, go to:

<https://fpbuu.org/connections/covenant-groups/>

For questions, contact Maureen Osborne, Chair

UU Connections

2024 Ware Lecture: Julia Watts Belser

Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 7:00 PM ET / 6:00 PM CT / 5:00 PM MT / 4:00 PM PT

Each year, the UUA President extends a prestigious invitation to an outstanding guest to captivate the General Assembly as the esteemed Ware Lecturer. To be part of this extraordinary moment, you must [register for General Assembly](#). With your registration, you'll have the privilege of live-streaming the event on June 22 or accessing the video on-demand when it's made available. Don't miss this opportunity to be inspired!



Julia Watts Belser (she/her) is a rabbi, scholar, spiritual teacher and a longtime activist for disability and gender justice. She is Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Georgetown University, as well as core faculty in Georgetown's Disability Studies Program and a Senior Research Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. Her work brings ancient Jewish texts into dialogue with disability studies, feminist thought, queer theory, and environmental justice ethics. She is a cultural historian of rabbinic Jewish literature and a contemporary Jewish feminist theologian who draws disability arts and culture into provocative conversation with Jewish tradition to challenge structural violence, deepen our capacity for social justice, and honor the sacredness of disabled people's lives.

Belser has held faculty fellowships at Harvard Divinity School and the Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of two scholarly books, *Rabbinic Tales of Destruction: Gender, Sex, and Disability in the Ruins of Jerusalem* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and *Power, Ethics, and Ecology: Rabbinic Responses to Drought and Disaster* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Her most recent book, *Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole* (Beacon Press, 2023; published in the UK by Hodder & Stoughton), is the recipient of a National Jewish Book Award.

At Georgetown, Belser directs [Disability and Climate Change: A Public Archive Project](#), an initiative that documents the wisdom and insights of disabled activists, artists, and first responders on the frontlines of climate crisis. She co-authored an international *Health Handbook for Women with Disabilities* (Hesperian Foundation, 2007), developed in collaboration with disability activists from 42 countries and translated into 14 languages, designed to help challenge the root causes of poverty, gender violence, and disability discrimination. She's also an avid wheelchair hiker, a lover of wild places, and a passionate supporter of disability dance.

FPBUU Policy Committee

The mission of the FPBUU Policy Committee is to develop policy language for issues deemed important by the Board of Trustees. Existing Policies may be found under the Governance heading on the FPBUU website. So far this year, the Policy Committee has revised the Animals on FPBUU Property Policy, is working on the creation of a Special Funds Policy, and has undertaken a major project in terms of developing a Records Retention Policy. Additionally, the Committee is currently in the process of developing language pertaining to certain aspects of the Annual Meeting process, the review of proposed bylaw revisions, and the use of the new flagpole. The Policy Committee meets monthly from September through May.

Members: Marilee Crocker, Jim Lieb (BOT liaison), Topper Roth (Chair), Lindsey Strauss and Karen Witting

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COVE is Here to Help!!

Communications Office Volunteers Extraordinaire (COVE) are here to support the administrative work of the church. Stop by the office, Mon-Thurs, 9 am-Noon.

Give us a call at 508-896-5577

or email cove@firstparishbrewster.org.

Let us know how we can help!

Website: www.fpbuu.org

Facebook: facebook.com/fpbuu/



Deadline Reminders

FPBUU Weekly Angle

Due Wednesday by 12 noon

weekly@firstparishbrewster.org

Facebook Submissions & Updates for the FPBUU website

communications@firstparishbrewster.org