

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy identifies and describes committees that support the work of First Parish (“the Church”) and which are not otherwise described in the Church’s Bylaws. The Board of Trustees (the Board) shall be responsible for creating any committees that it deems are necessary to serve the purposes of church life. The Board shall also be responsible for dissolving any committees that no longer serve the purposes of church life.

### **SCOPE**

FPC revised its bylaws in the year 2021. Prior to this version of the bylaws, all standing committees were identified and described within the bylaws. The 2021 version eliminated most of the committees from the bylaws, leaving only the Personnel and Committee on Ministry, which are appointed by the Board and the Nominating Committee and Endowment Committee, which are elected directly by the congregation, and do not report to the Board.

The Board shall be responsible for creating any other committees to serve the purposes of church life. The Board shall also be responsible for dissolving any committees that no longer serve the purposes of church life.

To be either accepted or dissolved as a committee requires approval of at least two-thirds of the Board present at the meeting where the vote takes place.

This policy provides a listing and description of all other major committees at FPC.

This policy does not include temporary task forces, nor does it include groups that meet for reasons other than the work of the Church, such as book clubs, bridge groups, or movie groups. Such groups may either self-form or be appointed by the Board of Trustees for specific purposes, which are outlined in their charters.

Ad hoc committees and task forces may be created only by the Board of Trustees or Program Council. Ad hoc committees and task forces report to the body that created them and disband upon completion of their assigned task.

Unless otherwise noted, all chairs of the committees listed in this policy are elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting for two-year terms and serve for no more than three consecutive terms. Committee chairs may appoint

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

sufficient persons to their committees to carry out the duties in their area of responsibility. Youth are welcomed and encouraged to become members of any church committee.

The Minister will be an ex officio member without a vote on all committees and task forces covered by this policy. The Minister will confer at least annually with each committee on how best to assist it. Attendance by the Minister at most committee meetings is welcome but not expected.

Each committee listed herein shall submit its budget recommendations to the Finance Chair. After approval of the budget by the congregation, committee chairs are responsible for administering their respective budgets. Council committees must have the approval of the Board of Trustees for out of budget expenditures.

The committees that perform the work of the Church include two major groups. The first group is appointed by and reports directly to the Board of Trustees. The committees include the Stewardship Committee and the Archives Committee. If needed, these committees are convened by the President of the Board of Trustees to elect a chairperson among their members and from then on, they do their work.

- The Stewardship Committee shall be responsible for stewardship activities undertaken on behalf of the congregation. The term limits for members of this committee are consistent with the term limits of the other standing committees. The Chair and/or Co-chair serve for three-year terms and will serve for no more than three consecutive terms.
- The Archives Committee shall be responsible for the identification, retention, and maintenance of the archive collection, which consists of the permanent records describing the history and functioning of the church. There are no term limits for this committee.

The chairs of other committees are elected by the congregation at its annual meeting. These committees are listed below, along with a description of their roles and responsibilities.

- The Adult Programs Committee shall plan and arrange adult educational programs such as classes, lectures, and discussion groups.

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

- The Arts Committee will be responsible for engaging the FPC Community and, as appropriate, the community at-large, in programs that develop and showcase creativity in the arts. The arts include, but are not limited to, visual arts, writing, dancing, theater, music (in conjunction with the Music Committee) performing, and other forms of family-friendly creative expression.
  - The committee will liaison with the Music Director to ensure music programs and arts programs are compatible. In addition, the Arts Committee will communicate with the congregation regarding arts-related opportunities at FPC and communicate/coordinate with other programming groups and publicity personnel as appropriate.
  - The committee shall be responsible for the purchase, maintenance, and storage of arts-related equipment, as allowed by the budget.
- The Buildings and Grounds Committee shall be responsible for the care of the church buildings and grounds. It may appoint, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, and supervise contractors for the care of the buildings and grounds.
  - The Building Committee shall be responsible for the care of the church building, the Fellowship Hall, the Connector, any sheds, and the Parsonage. It is empowered to make repairs and to purchase supplies. It shall be responsible for heating and utilities of the church.
  - The Grounds Committee shall be responsible for the maintenance of all church grounds, including parking lot, snow removal, and lawn mowing.
- The Caring Committee shall be responsible for providing outreach and support to members of the church in need. All members and friends of the church are considered members of the committee; in other words, anyone affiliated with the church may do the work of this committee.
- The Communications Committee shall be responsible for publicity, publications, electronic communications projects, the management of the information technology systems of the church, and other related areas. The

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

committee works with any assigned staff for publications beyond the FPC membership.

- The Denominational Affairs Committee shall serve as the point of contact with the Unitarian Universalist Association, the New England Region organization, other UU churches and related organizations. It shall provide information about the denomination periodically to the congregation and keep the congregation informed about significant UU issues and events. It shall support committees, the Board of Trustees, and the Minister, when necessary, regarding denominational activities and shall monitor communications from UU organizations that require action by the church. It shall provide coordination and assistance with financial grant applications to the district and the UUA. The chair shall be responsible for preparing and submitting the annual UUA Certification for the church.
- The Facilities Committee shall suggest to the Board of Trustees the creation of, or modification to, existing policies and guidelines relative to facility usage priorities, fees, and rules of use for church and non-church functions. It shall be responsible for the marketing of the facilities to the non-church community. It is responsible for the negotiation of renters' contracts for approval by the Board of Trustees. The committee reports directly to the Board of Trustees.
- The Finance Committee shall be responsible for general financial administration and preparation of the budget. The congregation shall elect a committee chair for a one-year term who shall report to the Board of Trustees. The committee chair serves no more than six consecutive terms. Only members of the church shall be eligible for this position. The committee chair shall keep informed of the financial condition of the church and be prepared to give reports when called upon and shall coordinate efforts with the Treasurer. The chair and members of the committee shall work with special committees appointed to raise funds for denominational appeals and special campaigns, such as building or renovation programs.
  - The committee shall be responsible for proposing initiatives and the means for financially and logistically accomplishing those initiatives in the areas of capital projects, staff size, church organization, and other areas designated by the Board of Trustees. It shall propose and maintain a multi-year plan including project roadmaps to address membership projections and space, staff, and program needs.

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

- The Fundraising Council shall be responsible for fundraising events. It shall recruit chairs for major fundraising events and shall supervise fundraising activities. It shall work with the Board of Trustees in setting budget goals for these events.
- The Hospitality Committee shall be responsible for providing refreshments following worship or other spiritual services.
- The Membership Committee shall welcome new and prospective members and assist the Minister and the Welcoming and Membership Coordinator in informing them of basic principles of Unitarian Universalism and the organization and operation of the church. It shall collaborate with and assist the assigned staff in accomplishing their responsibilities in working with church leadership to establish and support programs that facilitate full participation of church members, friends, and visitors.
  - The committee shall examine the membership roll of the church annually and provide information to the Board of Trustees regarding members who have left the church. This information will be used to support the potential removal of such persons from the membership rolls, as described in Article 4, Section 5 of the FPC Bylaws.
- The Memorial Garden Committee shall be responsible for the design, implementation and ongoing administration, record keeping and care of the FPC Memorial Garden. Ongoing responsibilities of the Committee include, but are not limited to:
  - all aspects of design; garden maintenance; arrangement for digging of holes for vials of ashes to be buried.
  - the keeping of financial records; keeping location records; getting plaques made and adhered to granite when purchased by members.
  - The Committee is empowered to make initial and ongoing purchases for the garden from appropriate vendors. These purchases include, but are not limited to plants and trees, soil, gravel, vials for ashes, plaques for benches and walls, and other similar materials.
  - It will keep records, in perpetuity, of the location of all: plaques, benches, and interred ashes.

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

- It will create, and update, as needed, policies regarding eligibility to have one's ashes interred in the garden.
- The Music Committee shall collaborate with and assist the Music Director in the accomplishment of their responsibilities for developing and coordinating the music programs and services. In addition, the committee shall act as the liaison between the congregation and the staff in matters concerning church music.
  - The committee shall oversee and may develop non-worship music programs involving the congregation as well as outside guests.
  - The committee shall assist the Music Director upon request in the maintenance and repair of the musical instruments owned by the church.
  - The committee shall be responsible for the purchase, storage, and maintenance of all sound system equipment used for musical performances.
- The Religious Education Committee shall collaborate with and assist the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and other religious education staff in accomplishing their responsibilities for developing and coordinating a Religious Education Program consistent with the long-range objectives of liberal religious education. Together they shall provide programs for children and youth of the church in accordance with these objectives and shall provide adequate space, equipment, curricula, supplies, and records to run the program efficiently. In addition, the committee shall act as the liaison between the congregation and the staff in matters of program, activities, and functions of the Religious Education Program.
- The Social Programs Committee shall be responsible for adult and family social activities.
- The Social Justice Council shall be responsible for providing opportunities for members of the church to express individually and collectively concern on ethical, social, political, and economic issues. The committee studies issues and recommends ways by which the church may work with other like-minded groups on local, national, and international issues.

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

- The church is committed to social justice positions in the manner described in the Social Justice policy and the Social Justice Council will guide members in using that policy.
- Council may organize separate task forces for certain issues, and coordinates among the task forces within the Council.
- The Council organizes plate-sharing recipients for the church year.
- The Council may not commit the membership of the church in general to any public position, but it may recommend such commitments to the Board of Trustees.
- The Worship Committee shall be responsible for summer services, special services, and the regular Sunday services in a supporting role to the Minister.

The Program Council comprises the chairs of committees that are responsible for the administration of the church programs. They are responsible to communicate with each other in coordinating events for the Church, as well as coordinating with each other on activities of mutual interest. The committees on the Program Council include the Adult Programs, Caring, Communications, Denominational Affairs, Fundraising, Hospitality, Membership, Music, Religious Education, Social Justice, Social Programs, and Worship Committees. While it does not include committees that are finance-related or campus-related committees such as Finance, Facilities, or Buildings and Grounds, these committees are welcome to work with the Council as they see fit.

III. RESPONSIBILITY Most responsibilities are described within the description of each committee. Additional responsibilities are described below. The Nominating Committee is ultimately responsible to identify names of candidates for Chair of each of the Committees. However, the members of the committees may recommend candidates to the Nominating Committee. The Vice President of the Board of Trustees chairs meetings of the Program Council.

IV. DEFINITIONS Members. Anyone who is identified by the FPC bylaws as being a member is a member. Friends. All others who do the work of the church but who are not members as defined by the Bylaws.

REFERENCES FPC Bylaws; Social Justice Policy

***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

**Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

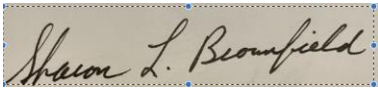
Revision # 02

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

     Katy Weeks, 4/20/21  
Originator / Date

Revised 6/20/23

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon L. Brownfield". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

6/20/23

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FPC President / Date



***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

**Policy on Church Committees**

Policy # 024

Revision # 02

Attachment 1

**Policy Attachment(s)**

[Elaboration and clarification if needed, forms to be used, etc.]