

2019-2020 Vision of Ministry

Why do we have a Vision of Ministry?

The preparation of the annual Vision of Ministry has been an integral part of the transition of First Parish in Cambridge to a new governance model that was catalyzed by the search for a new minister back in 2015. The new governance model was embodied in the adoption of new by-laws in March 2017, the restructuring of the Governing Board with a new Board Policy Book and the congregation's successful calling of our Lead Minister, Reverend Adam Lawrence Dyer in September 2017. Our transition process involved deep reflection during the 2-year interim ministerial search period to produce these results.

Many changes were adopted based on the discernment of the Standing Committee, congregational input provided to the Ministerial Search Committee, and the Governance Working Group. This multifaceted effort, guided by the congregation's mission statement, resulted in some important shifts in the way the congregation's operations would be managed and established a transparent foundation for the selection of a new minister who is committed to the concept of a shared ministry, an enhanced partnership between volunteers and staff guided by an annual Vision of Ministry prepared with input from all. The development of this transition process was guided by the board's shared reading of **Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership** by Dan Hotchkiss as well as other Unitarian Universalist Association resources.

The Vision of Ministry process as described in **Governance and Ministry**, is intended to identify 3-5 priority areas annually where the congregation can make progress in the next 1-3 years. Last year, the Vision of Ministry was prepared with the input of both the senior staff and the Governing Board meeting together in a Saturday workshop to brainstorm what were these key issues facing the congregation. And this year, we were able to integrate the important step of seeking input from the Ministry Team Leaders at a meeting held with Rev Adam in November and from the congregation at two meetings lead by the Governing Board in January to seek input on what we are doing to further our mission – what is working and what can be improved.

The Board's spring Vision of Ministry workshop produced the summary below. It is important to note that the three priority areas have been adopted for a second year: Community Care, Outreach, Increasing Capacity/Building Capability, recognizing that more work is needed to make progress that is meaningful. The bullet points under each of these priority areas are intended to inspire creativity on the part of the staff and the Ministry Teams to come up with approaches that can further us on meeting these goals. These are suggested tactics or strategies that will be refined as teams delve into the problem solving complexities of these mission related priorities. We trust that our governance model as it evolves will promote trust, relationship building, collaboration and mutual respect and will inspire teams to find the most effective and spiritually fulfilling way to address these priorities as we move forward together in the coming year.

First Parish in Cambridge Vision of Ministry 2019-20

At its workshop the Board decided that implementation of Vision of Ministry 2018-19 priorities (in italics) should continue with additional attention to areas derived from congregational feedback/trends for new 2019-20 Vision of Ministry

Community Care (congregation and staff members caring for one another)

- *Realize an accessibility and inclusion action plan*
- *Develop a building care plan and strategy*
- *Demonstrate welcoming in spirit and action*
- Deepen spiritual experience
- Improve internal communications
- Strengthen pastoral care
- Have fun (now!)

Outreach (how First Parish is known in the community)

- *Strengthen homelessness ministry and strategy*
- *Embody and communicate welcoming community*
- Improve external communications
- Develop measures for outreach efficacy
- Create ways to attract people to use our space
- Actively participate in festivals in Harvard Sq.
- Make music connections (for example with Passim, BSO, Longy, Berkeley, NEC)
- Publicize events both internally & externally

Increasing Capacity/Building Capability

- *Explore “in-reach” needs and opportunities*
- *Develop staff and volunteer leadership skills*
- *Build trust*
- Improve financial & organizational sustainability
- Build bridges between RE + community as a whole
- Develop metrics to measure capacity