Theodore Parker Church

Report of the Standing Committee 2016 – 2017

Members(Years of service and officer position, if pertinent):

Beth Bauer (3rd, Chair), Joel Neiditz (3rd, Vice Chair), Jennifer Bottomley (1st yr., 2nd term, Treasurer), Stanzi Royden (2nd, Clerk), Jessica Mink (2nd), Brad Parker (2nd), Beth Black (1st), Marcia Feldman (1st), Posy Walton (1st).

The Standing Committee is the central governing body of the church. Acting on behalf of the congregation, it is charged with managing church property and supervising all aspects of church life. It creates committees and working groups and is responsible for fostering communication among committees, leadership, staff, and the entire church community.

Over the past year the Standing Committee focused on *Reaching Forward*, a future-oriented dimension of our *Reaching In, Reaching Out* Theme. With our accessibility goals in mind, the Standing Committee worked for construction of an accessible restroom in the narthex of the sanctuary. We submitted a successful Woburn Grant, led a congregational meeting and vote to approve the project and its financing, and spear-headed fund-raising, including our first church experiment with online giving.

The Standing Committee also established a Vision Team to suggest possible guiding missions and financing models for our future space renovations. Working from an assessment of our current ministries, strengths, and outreach, the Vision Team prepared recommendations for a long-term vision for our spaces, increased rental opportunities, and near- and longer-term priorities for future renovations.

Open communication and community building were, as always, important priorities for the Standing Committee. We submitted monthly e-news reports on our activities and concerns and introduced a new, more crowd-friendly format for our congregation’s annual fellowship event. Key to our efforts to listen and promote dialogue among our whole community were the March budget presentation and all of the open meetings held before this year’s congregational votes on accessibility, sanctuary, and racial justice. In our SC meetings we continue to reflect on process and best practices, both for our congregational meetings and for ensuring accountability to our newly articulated sanctuary and racial justice commitments.

Other highlights from the past year:

•Finalization of updated rental policies, policies for gratis use of our spaces (thank you Joel Neiditz).

•A second successful Winter Fair.

•Expanding networks of community connections, including music and Halloween events with West Roxbury Main Streets, links with Progressive West Roxbury/Roslindale, RISE, and the interfaith JP Sanctuary Coalition.

•Work with Nominating on strategies for leadership development.

•Establishment of process and policy for determining church sponsorship of public events.

•First steps toward creating a stewardship committee in charge of pledge drives and other fundraising.

•Beginning the search for a new office administrator (hiring committee, ads, preliminary interviews).

•New ‘flash mob’ model to organize volunteer clean-up days at the church.

The Standing Committee gratefully acknowledges the often invisible efforts of all those who lovingly sustain Theodore Parker Church and help move us forward. It has been an honor to work with you all this past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Bauer, Chair

May 27, 2017