

# First Parish of Norwell

## Strategic Plan

---



FEBRUARY 2020

---

Prepared by  
The First Parish of Norwell  
Strategic Planning Committee

## Strategic Plan

### Goals 2020-2025

1. **Establish Leadership.** FPN shall become well known and respected as a moral leader of its community by providing:

- a. An inspiring worship service that both respects traditions and addresses current events;
- b. A community where all persons are accepted and respected and diversity is welcomed;
- c. An environment for learning and discussion of contemporary issues and UU values; and
- d. Service to its community and beyond reflecting UU values.

This goal may serve as a vision of what FPN wishes to be by 2025 and shall be implemented by the activities and initiatives described in the following provisions of this plan.

2. **Build Capacity.** FPN shall build its capacity to achieve Goal #1 by doing the following:

- a. **Hire and support a new Minister** with the following characteristics:
  - Will deliver inspiring sermons that also offer practical teaching applicable to everyday life;
  - Has a charismatic personality and the ability to successfully recruit and involve people in the work of the Church;
  - Will keep the Church outwardly focused as well as inwardly focused;
  - Will work to reduce divisiveness in the congregation;
  - Will become well known in the community as one of its leaders; and
  - Will get to know each of the parishioners and deliver pastoral care to them that is responsive to their needs.

- b. With the new minister **Enhance Worship Services** to have the following characteristics:
- The worship service is inspiring and has multigenerational appeal;
  - The service is organized and thematic;
  - Contemporary issues are addressed and action prompted;
  - The service furthers learning and enriches the spirit; and
  - It is accessible and available to a diverse and geographically dispersed community
- c. **Bolster fundraising efforts**, starting with an assessment of the Church’s current fundraising program to identify opportunities for increased support. Under the leadership of the Finance Committee, an experienced volunteer or consultant should be asked to conduct an evaluation that includes:
- Detailed assessment of “current state” of giving
  - Establishing fundraising projections and goals for major gifts, annual fundraising, special events, online fundraising, and planned (legacy) giving.
  - Recommendations for how to yield projected revenue, including the feasibility of a capital campaign to leverage legacy gifts, support additional outreach, and inspire donors through a matching-gift initiative
  - A fundraising staffing plan, budget, and timeline
  - A donor recognition program
- d. **Raise FPN’s profile**. The Church must take intentional steps to increase its visibility among current members, prospective parishioners and the community at large. The process should start by establishing a Publicity Committee to assess how the Church currently informs others about its activities and how it promotes the benefits of engagement in Church initiatives. Other priorities would include:
- Improving how FPN is found online (e.g., cross-channel content management strategy, social media, search engine optimization, paid search, YouTube channel)
  - Augmenting FPN’s website (including a mobile app)
  - Increase FPN’s visibility through direct mail, signage, displays, exhibits, logo items (e.g., bags, pens, magnets), and printed materials

e. **Expand the Helen Fogg Service Committee** to coordinate and expand the outreach programs of FPN to serve the social action interests of present parishioners and attract young persons and families (and others) who care about social action but who do not have much time for, or interest in, traditional church services or programs. Change the name of the committee to include Outreach rather than Service to make it clear that its focus is outward to benefit the community. The committee would be staffed by a new part-time Outreach Coordinator and have two principle responsibilities:

- to mobilize resources in support of FPN-sponsored activities in the communities it serves and beyond to bring people together, further learning and service, and if appropriate generate additional revenues, and
- to coordinate FPN's participation in high-profile activities run by other organizations.

The committee should research the social action programs of other churches in the community and establish relationships with them to find out what programs were successful and if there are future programs that could benefit from joint efforts. A section of the Environmental Assessment has a partial list of the many outreach programs of four local churches.

In addition to budgeting for the Outreach Coordinator the committee should have an outreach budget to support its activities. This could cover routine expenses such as food, transportation and parking and perhaps donations to other nonprofits, which if significant should be subject to the approval of the Parish Committee.

The hope and expectation for expanded outreach is to create a new path for persons to become involved in FPN, even if they never become formal members of the Church and to strengthen its position in the community and perhaps its financial situation. Accordingly this group should be periodically honored, thanked and publicized in Church events and publications.

f. **Encourage and expand joint programming/partnerships** with affiliated and like-minded organizations, including:

- The First Parish Pre-School and James Library and Center for the Arts
- Other UU churches and faith communities
- Organizations that support youth and young families

- g. **Devise youth engagement strategies** to help attract young families. Steps should be taken to integrate youth into Church leadership, committees and activities. Other recommendations include:
  - Establishing a Youth Advisory Council involving community leaders who work with youth to share engagement tactics and approaches
  - Offering scholarships
  - Encouraging youth engagement in FPN and other social justice initiatives
  
- h. **Make strategic investments** in pursuit of growth and physical plant maintenance. Under the direction of the Building and Grounds Committee, priorities should include:
  - Moving forward with plans to complete a capital needs assessment
  - Preparing a master plan for the use and maintenance of FPN real estate, including recommendations on how best to leverage existing properties to create dedicated space(s) for learning, discussion, and youth engagement, as well as accommodations for individuals with accessibility challenges.
  - Ongoing support for building maintenance
  
- i. **Set growth targets** and measure progress to achieve them. Initial targets include:
  - Increasing Church “on the book” membership to 165 people by 2025
  - Increasing annual pledge income by 2025
  - Increasing numbers of people volunteering in FPN programs by 25 percent

Please see *Appendix D* for further insights on setting quantitative and qualitative measures.

- 3. **Improve its Organization.** FPN shall improve its administration and governance to facilitate achievement of the goals of this plan.
  - a. **Revise its Committee Structure.** FPN has too many committees and the committee structure does not reflect the goals of this plan. There are presently 23 committees, plus another 3 provided for in the Bylaws which are not functioning (see *Appendix C*). The attachment indicates that 5 acting committees plus 2 inactive are elected and another 11 plus 1 inactive are required standing committees but not elected. Of the 23 committees 3 have the same chair and perhaps 2 are inactive.

A proposed new committee structure is included in *Appendix D*. A final version of the new committee structure should be determined by the Parish Committee and reflected in revised Bylaws. The rationale was to preserve the active committees that are important to the governance and functioning of FPN, eliminate or combine the inactive committees and emphasize the outreach function which is the heart of the strategic plan.

A summary of the suggested changes in the committee structure is the following:

- The **Parish Committee** (PC) would be responsible for the functions of the Committee on Shared Ministry and Personnel, and retain its functions regarding the membership of the Ministerial Search committees. The PC would use subcommittees or task forces that include persons who are not members of the Parish Committee when needed. These functions reflect normal responsibilities of the Parish Committee to support and evaluate the minister, establish personnel policies and compensation and search for a new minister when needed.
- The **Finance Committee** would be responsible for the functions of the Legacy Gifts Committee as part of its overall responsibility for raising revenues. The functions include having an estate planning expert available to talk to prospective donors individually or at a meeting.
- The **Building and Grounds Committee** would be responsible for the functions of the Capital Improvement Committee since they know best what is needed and the cost. This may already have occurred.
- The **Membership Committee** would include the Pastoral Care Team since this is a membership service needed occasionally.
- The **Worship Committee** would include the Music Committee since most of the music occurs during the worship service.
- The new **Publicity Committee** would include the website managers as it considers ways to promote FPN through social media, traditional media and special events (see goal 2d).

- b. **Develop Committee Mission Statements** for the new or combined committees that describe their roles and responsibilities and revise the FPN website to reflect the changes.
- c. **Better utilize the FPN membership database** to manage information about current and prospective FPN members and supporters. The database would be used to organize and simplify key information throughout the strategic plan's implementation. Leveraging the database is fundamental to achieving FPN's aims because it will:
  - Allow FPN to verify the current state of membership, pledge income, engagement and community awareness in order to set realistic, measurable growth targets in each area;
  - Improve communication by automating key marketing/communications initiatives such as email, e-newsletters, text messaging and social media; and
  - Make it possible to track and report the strategic plan's success in key areas
- d. **Build a more robust human resource function** in support of both paid staff and volunteers. The process should start by having the Parish Committee arrange for an assessment of the extent to which FPN is in full compliance with Federal and State labor laws and employment regulations. Findings from the assessment would then be used to update policies, procedures and practices as may be necessary. The process also should include a review of staff and volunteer orientation, on-boarding, continuing education, safety/emergency preparedness training, and off-boarding procedures.
- e. **Revise the FPN Bylaws** to reflect the new committee structure once it is determined and to make other changes that would modernize bylaw provisions and help them to conform to the goals of the strategic plan (see *Appendix E*). The ESC consultants can help an appropriate FPN committee to make decisions about what Bylaw changes should be made but the drafting and approval of new Bylaws should be handled by an experienced lawyer for the Church.