

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Of Medfield

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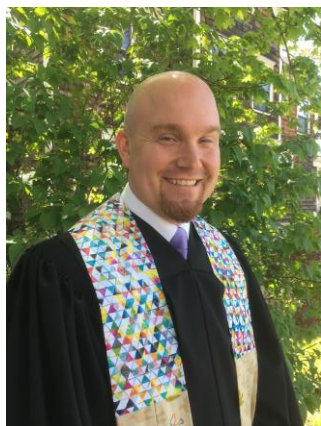
www.firstparishmedfield.org



September 2023 Newsletter

Ministerial Musings

Dave Egan, Minister



Sometimes I wish I could freeze time. Or at least slow it down. It seems like I blinked and the summer was gone. How could that have happened? And yet there are lots of moment etched in memory: carrying our FPUU banner at

General Assembly, encountering a mama bear and

her cubs in the Smoky Mountains, taking the family whitewater rafting on the Kennebec River, collecting shells at sunrise along the shores of Ferry Beach. So many moments of pure joy.

As life whizzes by, it is these moments that can sustain us, especially when the outside world intrudes with stories and pictures of injustice in its multitude forms, of violence and brutality, of increased evidence of climate change. It would be easy to descend into feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, depression and despair if we didn't have these moments to remember. If we didn't

pause long enough to notice. If we remained so focused on electronic screens that we missed the abundance of beauty and goodness and generosity surrounding us.

We are beginning another year together. We will pay attention to what is happening in the world, of course, and how we can engage and help to make a difference. We will attempt to bring some clarity to the big questions of life. But we are also going to celebrate how marvelous life can be. There's going to be joyful and soulful music, stories and

laughter, as well as opportunities to talk deeply with each other. We are also going to take time to slow down and breathe deeply so that we can remember moments of joy and be grateful.

It will be so good to see you all.

In faith,
Rev. Dave

Upcoming Services

September 10

Ingathering: From Many Waters

Rev. Dave Egan

Welcome back to church! On this the first regular service of the new church year, you are invited to bring water from a place you have travelled to this past summer. Whether your water is from the Nile River or your kitchen sink, come share your experience with us. There will be no religious exploration classes today since this is an intergenerational service.

September 17

UU Gadflies and Visionaries

Rev. Dave Egan

This Sunday, Rev. Dave will share his impressions of our 2023 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. This is a pivotal time in our faith's journey where old patterns, privileges, and priorities are being challenged. The backlash from this transformation is both predictable and deeply challenging.

September 24

Forgive Me

Rev. Dave Egan

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year in Judaism, where atonement and repentance are sought for any sins committed over the previous year. When we cause injury to those we love and even to those we have never met, how do we make right that which has been broken?

Church Office Reminders



Church Newsletter: Third Sunday of the month. [This month it is September 18th.](#)

Order of Service: Wednesdays by 5:00 pm.

Church Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Email: admin@firstparishmedfield.org

Sandra Andreassi-Administrator

Religious Exploration classes start on Sept 17th.



WHAT'S NEW IN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION?

Tiane Jennings and Kirsten Dabate are the co-chairs of the committee, and Sarah Zitoli is our Lead Teacher for K-6! Though we are operating without a staffed CRE this year, the committee has grown, and has been organizing a fun new Fall program.

Here are some highlights of the Religious Exploration program we are very excited to share:

- Little Lights childcare is back! We are thrilled that Jackson and Avery Razza will be hired as our alternating Lead sitters, with one adult volunteer needed each Sunday as a Little Lights Guide.
- RE will meet 2-3 times per month, with Intergenerational family services (often called 'Intergens') happening twice per month.
- For kids, 'Intergen' services will include the chance to dig through our new 'treasure chest' of fun fidget toys! Come early on September 10th for the Intergen Water Communion service to choose a 'treasure' to hold and quietly enjoy during the service.
- The new curriculum for K-6 will be based on short, animated Disney/Pixar films shown in class, with a discussion and activity to follow. It is called 'CartUUns' and should be lots of fun for all ages.
- The winter solstice service will be held on December 17th, and RE will meet for 4 consecutive Sundays before December 17th to allow time to plan and rehearse an original worship service with their Leader and Guide.
- Our Whole Lives (OWL): our trained OWL facilitators are planning for this year's OWL program, and the group is welcoming additional interested participants. For any families with youth entering 8th and 9th grades who are interested in finding out more, please contact us at cre@firstparishmedfield.org.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We already have some RE volunteer slots filled, but you can help by emailing Kirsten and Tiane at cre@firstparishmedfield.org and volunteering for any of the following:

- A Little Lights Guide is needed for September 10th, 17th, and 24th, and October 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th.
- An RE Guide for both October 8th and 15th. (Note that the RE Guide position requires NO advance planning - you simply show up on 2 Sundays of your month when RE lessons are held and support the Lead teacher who prepares and presents the lesson.)

- One solstice planning Guide for November 19th and 26th, and another solstice planning Guide for December 3rd and 10th – the four weeks leading up to the December 17th winter solstice service.
- A Signup Genius link for all Little Lights and RE opportunities will be posted on the Members section of the FPUU website – but until then, just email Kirsten and Tiane at cre@firstparishmedfield.org.

Many thanks to those who have already volunteered to assist with these RE and Little Lights openings, and to those who are considering it! We look forward to a wonderful year ahead with the children and youth of FPUU.

Notes From the Music Director

Eva Conley Kendrick

CALL TO CHOIR



Hi all, I hope you've had a wonderful summer! Whether you are considering joining for the first time or returning, I wanted to invite you to join us for choir this session! Highlights of the choir season include:

—Singing with a friendly, supportive group of people! All experience levels welcome!

—A variety of new-to-us repertoire including the "Caroling Medley" by

the Osmond Family, "Simple" by K.D. Lang, as well as a choral premiere by Eva Conley Kendrick and more!

—Practice tracks in a Choir Google Drive for easy learning and practicing.

—A Choir Winter Party at Becca and John Kornet's house!

—Choir outings to see other choral groups of different styles!

Singing in a choir can be a source of many things to many people: creative self-expression, spiritual nourishment, engaging in community, good for your health and of course, just plain fun! Read the article below for more details:

[7 Benefits of Choir Singing](#)

singdaptive.com

Whether returning or joining for the first time, please RSVP for the choir season by e-mailing Eva Conley Kendrick at music@firstparishmedfield.org or evakendrick@comcast.net.

Thank you!

Eva

From the Executive Board



Executive Board Organizes 2023-24 Work Around the Four Strategic Focuses

The First Parish Executive Board formally began its new church year with a meeting on Thursday, August 24. The meeting was held at the home of Board Chair Bill Wians following a meal shared by board members.

The Board reaffirmed that its work for 2023-24 will be organized around the Four Strategic Focus areas approved at the June 4 annual meeting. The four areas include:

1. Growth and Membership Outreach (board contacts: Martha Castle and Kay Bennett)
2. Revenue Research and Fundraising (board contacts: Marshall Sugarman and Michael Taylor)
3. Capital projects timetable (board contacts: Jeanette Ruyle and Michael Taylor)
4. Congregational Self-care (board contact: Jen Bartle)

Chair Bill Wians will function as a floater in touch with members working on all four areas.

As was explained at the annual meeting, the four areas aren't meant to replace or usurp existing committees. Rather, each area is meant to serve as a focus around which the Board and FPUU committees can organize their work internally and coordinate with other committees.

The Board also identified three immediate priorities:

1. Adjusting staff salaries. Because of the very difficult financial situation at the close of the Congregation's previous fiscal year, staff salaries were frozen at their 2022-23 levels. The Board promised at the Annual Meeting to adjust salaries as soon as financial conditions improved. The Board will continue to monitor finances to make a retroactive pay raise as soon as possible.
2. First Parish safety and security. First Parish lags behind many other area religious organizations in its planning for the safety of its worshippers. While important steps have been taken regarding fire safety, much more needs to be done to address other risks.
3. Investing in membership growth. First Parish UU is special. There are hundreds of families looking for a non-dogmatic, affirming religious experience for themselves and their children. The Board will work closely with the Membership Outreach Committee, the Worship and Music Committee, and the Religious Education committee to let them know we are here and what is special about our religious community.

While there is much to accomplish, the Executive Board is confident about the future of First Parish. The work that lies ahead promises to bring FPUU out of its financial difficulties and put it on a path to future growth and well-being.

Future board meetings will take place on Zoom beginning at 7pm. Meetings are open to all First Parish members. To request a link, please contact Board Clerk Kay Bennett.

Building And Grounds Summer Activities

Usually, we wait until September to have a grounds church clean-up day, but this year we had to start in August. Why? With all our rain those awful weeds have gone crazy! We took six large bags to the transfer station. We trash them since they are so invasive.

Thanks to Jeanette Ruyle we have two lovely hydrangeas purchased and planted by Jeanette. They are located by the front white fence. Besides mowing the lawn, Jeanette has also helped pull weeds along with Jay Bibel and David Temple.

Yes, we still need to have a workday in September. We have more weeds to remove and general clean up. Working together can be fun and as they say, it takes our community.



From drab to fab...!

U-House Bathroom Re-do: Thanks to the generosity, time and efforts of Eve P, Diane and David Maxson, (Do we ever miss them) and David Russell, we have a newly decorated bathroom in the U-House! Wow! What an amazing improvement for our staff, our renters and all of those who use the U-House!

After...



Before...



News from our Garden-By-the-Fence

Sunflowers planted by young RE folks (seems like a long time ago) are growing! Blossoming will happen soon.



Two new members of the garden—lace cap hydrangeas named “Let’s Dance.” Many, many gargantuan weeds were removed by Eve Potts, David Temple, Jeanette Ruyle, and Jay Bibel. Thank you!



Resident toad hiding at the base of FPUU's big cherry tree.



Green Grow the Grasses-O! Mowing the lawn at FPUU as a Spiritual Practice

It used to be that mowing the lawn at FPUU was a volunteer task-- sometimes done by a youth, often by an adult congregant, and always with a borrowed lawnmower that had to be transported to church somehow. Times have changed. The nice change is that, thanks to Rich Mastrondardi, an arrangement has been made a while back with the Town to include FPUU's pond-side property in the town's mowing. The costly change is that we have been paying a yard care company to mow the front lawn for the past few years. Last year the charge was \$60 a visit for a total of \$540 for April through October. We do not know if they came "as needed" and stopped during last summer's drought or not. If there had been the amount of rainfall we have had this summer, perhaps the total would have been higher.

This year, with the permission of Building & Grounds, I offered an experiment. Professional mowing was suspended. No mowing was done in May (for No Mow May), and I began mowing the church lawn in June with my new battery-operated lawnmower. I purchased the smallest model available at Home Depot – 16" wide and quite lightweight-- because that is all I need at my house. It was easy to get to church. For a while I kept it in the U House basement. The mower is much quieter than a gas mower, not at all smelly, and easy to push. The battery charges quickly. I do the mowing without a bag, so the cuttings go back and replenish the grass. The bag is not needed if mowing is done before the grass gets very tall.

Mowing the front lawn at church has been kind of like walking a labyrinth—very meditative. It takes a while because the mower cuts a narrow swath. It also takes more than two battery charges to complete the whole yard. For these reasons, I decided not to recruit other volunteer mowers this summer, thinking that most people would not want to spend their time this way. If the lawnmower were larger, it would go more quickly. The next size up at Home Depot is 20" which would be better for our size lawn. I have not done extensive research on different mower brands and prices. Could FPUU own one of these?

Pros: no fossil fuel used; no fumes; little noise; good for the lawn; pleasant amount of exercise; satisfaction at the end; light enough to store easily in U House basement; would more than pay for itself in one season (not counting labor of volunteer which is priceless)
Cons: needs a volunteer(s) and time; needs occasional maintenance
What do you think?

If you would like to experience what it is like to use a battery-operated mower, contact me, Jeanette Ruyle jruyle23@verizon.net



American Red Cross Blood Drive – November 14th

Hello First Parish Friends,

I'm so excited to keep the tradition going as we plan for our 3rd official blood drive at FPUU this November!!

Sharing this info as a save the date, but never too early to commit - follow the instructions here and sign up to donate if you can!

More info to follow, as with previous drives, I'll be looking for volunteers to help set up and break down, as well as two greeters each hour. As those who have volunteered at past drives will tell you, this is definitely a feel-good event, and you will for sure enjoy helping out!

Thanks in advance, and please feel free to reach out with questions:
bongo_8@msn.com

Sara Drumm



Schedule your blood donation appointment today.



American Red Cross Blood Drive
First Parish UU of Medfield
26 North Street
Medfield, MA 02052

Tuesday, November 14th, 2023- 12.30 - 6pm

To schedule an appointment please visit
[www.redcrossblood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive?) at
<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive?>
and enter sponsor code:UUMedfield

Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse is on the International Stage

By Thea Iberall



One of the greatest honors of my life was representing Los Angeles at the National Poetry Slams in Austin, Texas. The stakes were high. At the finals, where tickets were being scalped for \$1200, CNN recorded just some of the excitement. What the cameras could never capture was the camaraderie and deep connection that the poets were making beneath the sharing of their insights, wisdom, and raw emotions.

When I moved to Massachusetts in 2015, I wanted to create that same type of experience. Because without the spoken word in my life, something was missing. That way of connecting deeply. Not just gathering with people talking about kids and favorite movies, not just going to parties and exchanging recipes. I wanted to hear the Jerry Quickleys of the world sharing a poem about his cousin's gang death and the Deborah Edler Browns talking about anti-Semitism and her grandparent's survival from the Holocaust.

So, with the help of friends, we created a space at First Parish. In the four years we ran Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse, we held 44 events, attended by 1458 people (74% came from outside FPUU), and raised \$7,000 for FPUU (we could have raised more if we charged more). We featured 16 singing groups, 24 spoken word artists, 3 dance events, and 1 theatrical show. And I can't even count the number of open mic participants. We connected with businesses like Medfield TV, Medfield Hometown Weekly, Starbucks, the Medfield Cultural Alliance, the Combined Jewish Philanthropy, and 100 Thousand Poets for Change (100TPC). Let me tell you about this latter one. Began in 2011 by Michael Rothenberg and Terri Carrion, 100TPC encouraged venues around the world to promote peace, sustainability and justice. It's about collective experience with a mission. It prompted the largest simultaneous poetry event ever. It's about "going beyond the imagining and into the act of creating a world where people can raise their voices without being punished for it."

So every year, in September along with thousands of other venues around the world, Expresso Yourself was part of the call for social, environmental and political change. And as a result, it has put First Parish on the map. In the middle of the alphabet from Abbotsford to Zimbabwe. 100TPC has published a book **100 Thousand Poets for Change: 10+ Years of Poetic Activism** (edited by Pilar Rodriguez Aranda, Lisa Vihos, and Canuto Roldán), AnArca Editions, 2023. Amongst the 130 essays is one entitled "100TPC at the Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse." In it are my reflections of our 100TPC events over the years, augmented by photographs of First Parish and Expresso. On Sunday, September 24th, 100TPC will be hosting a **Book Launch Virtual Party** at 2pm Eastern Time. I will send you a link because we will be mentioned. Also, you can buy a copy of the book at https://www.amazon.com/dp/BoCFCYVW7S?ref_=pe_3052080_397514860

Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse lets the outside community see how special FPUU is as a dynamic and friendly place. Our events fostered community goodwill and attracted people to us. Plus they brought money in for repairs. Importantly and especially because we were participating in 100TPC, Expresso was demonstrating that FPUU deeply cares about social justice.

I'm hoping we continue on this path. **Who wants Expresso to return?**

From the Anti-Racism Team



The UU Urban Ministry (UUUM) offers several interesting tours that start at their offices at First Church in Roxbury. In July, three members of the Anti-Racism Team attended a wonderful tour of the trees of John Eliot Square in Roxbury.

The tour was led by UUUM Board member (and aptly named) Thomas Plant, who truly has an archival mind and was able to answer questions on a range of topics. He even volunteered some information when he heard we had folks from FPUU Medfield in attendance: apparently during the Revolutionary War, British soldiers entered Old South Church on horseback, defiling the building.

When First Church heard about this, they were worried the same might happen to them, so they gathered all their silver and other valuables and moved them to First Parish for safekeeping until the end of the war!

We learned about all the trees surrounding First Church, went across the street to the Roxbury Heritage State Park which hosts several Roxbury Russet apple trees and the historic former Parish House which is now a history museum, and were introduced to the UUUM's lovely peace garden. After the tour, we walked into Nubian Square and visited Frugal Bookstore, a wonderful POC- owned bookstore.

To learn more about upcoming tours and other activities, visit the UUUM website: [Attend | Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry](https://www.uuum.org/upcoming-events)
Link: <https://www.uuum.org/upcoming-events>

Thomas Plant alongside UUUM Executive Director Rev. Mary Margaret Earl



The Peace Garden



Members of ART



Monthly Mediation & Reflection

Shirley Riga, Spiritual Director

Member of the Pastoral Care Committee

By Ellen Dionna

SO WHAT DO I KNOW?

This is what I know.

I know that for my whole life things are not as they seem.

I know that in an instant—on a dime, so they say—life can turn you inside out and upside down and leave you without bearings or direction.

I know that when life turns that way, you need to find your own compass—pull it out of ancestral stories and fortitude, or your own gut instincts.

I know that once you get your bearings again with that compass—once you're sure it's got a true magnetic North—you've got to move forward in the only way you see clear for the next step.

I know that you might only see that first step—and your vision may be fuzzy—but you take it anyhow.

I know that first next step leads to your salvation.

I know that for a lot of us these days—and I include all species and beings who may not have any organ of knowing that I know—things are slip-sliding sideways and maybe even upside down and the only thing we have is holding on to those we love and trust.

I know that in the slip-sliding unknowing shifting we have to laugh a lot—our combined senses of humor may be part of that aforementioned salvation.

I know that as Dr. Who said long ago that time is a big ball of wibbly wobbly timey wimey stuff, and that we must savor the good times and make them last, and endure the hard times and learn the most we can, and it's ok to be wibbly wobbly and maybe a little whiney in the hard times. (Because after all I know I'm human, and presumably so are you.)

I know that the wibbly wobbly slip-sliding means we can let go of a lot that we think matters.

I know that you can be on the edge and you might lose everything that ever mattered to you, and that shrinking back isn't ultimately going to save you—you have to leap.

I know there are Angels that help you fluff up your wings when you take that leap.

I know that life isn't just the wibbly wobbly timey wimey stuff, nor the slip-sliding sideways fall on your ass stuff, but I know it's also the bumper cars grinding and whizzing and banging around a crazy electrified universe stuff. (Maybe we all have an invisible vertical rod that connects us to the ceiling of electrified Dark Matter.)

I know you think you are in charge.

I know you are definitely not in charge, and neither am I.

I know that higher ups who think they are in charge may be the most dangerous among us.

I know that the sooner you surrender your IN CHARGE passport, the happier you will be.

I know there is something so big and generous and loving out there it is a Field that guides and supports stars and galaxies beyond imagining.

I know that they and I are a part of that Field.

And I know that's good enough for me.

And knowing this, I can go on.

Green Sanctuary Committee News



Our next meeting is Aug. 28, 2023, at 7pm via Zoom, too late for this newsletter! For our September meeting, date TBD-- All are welcome! Email [Jeanette Ruyle](mailto:Jeanette.Ruyle@medfield.org) for link and more info.



Medfield Day September 23, 2023 and GSC



GSC will have some examples of items made from upcycled textiles. Coordinating with the MOC and the REC, we will have an activity for children, plus a drawing for three beautiful bags made of billboards.



A simple yet important way to be a climate activist: Petition Gov. Healey to stop gas pipeline expansions!

Eversource has been wanting to build an additional pipeline through Springfield to Longmeadow. Residents of these communities have been fighting it, as reported in [this article](#).

Although the state Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs has issued a delay, as reported [here](#), it is very likely Eversource will try to work around this.

The [UU Mass Action](#) Climate & Environmental Justice Team is joining in with [Mass Power Forward](#) to send Gov. Maura Healey a message to keep her promise about climate goals and "Put Gas in the Past."

If you agree and have not already signed, go to [this petition](#)

If you are interested in more information about the Climate & Environmental Justice Team of UU Mass Action, [check it out](#). They meet monthly for one hour to get stuff done!

Of Interest:

Inflation Reduction Act Resources to Help You Electrify Your Home –

[webinar](#) from Interfaith Power & Light, Thursday September 7 at 7pm, free. You can register even if you cannot attend, and you will receive a recording.

Climate Week NYC 2023



"Climate Week NYC" is the largest annual climate event of its kind, bringing together some 400 events and activities across the City of New York – in person, hybrid and online. Each year, business leaders, political change makers, local decision takers and civil society representatives of all ages and backgrounds, from all over the world, gather to drive the transition, speed up progress, and champion change that is already happening... This year Climate Week NYC will be held

from September 17-24, 2023. The event takes place every year in partnership with the United Nations General Assembly and is run in coordination with the United Nations and the City of New York.

The March to End Fossil Fuels-- Sept. 17 at 1pm in NYC

Various groups from around the nation are organizing to attend this march. Thousands are expected. Details about how to get a bus from Boston to NYC on Sept. 17 through Mass 350 [are here](#).

The Social Justice Incubator (SJI)

The SJI serves as an umbrella group to help nurture and support a **wide variety of social justice initiatives led by FPUU congregants**.

Here are the initiatives either currently going on at FPUU or on the horizon (in alphabetical order) – organizations/initiatives, a brief description of each, and the person(s) to contact if you'd like to get more involved. **Not seeing something on this list that appeals to you? Have another idea for a social justice initiative you'd like to start? We'd love to hear it!** Contact chair becca_kornet@yahoo.com and we will set up time to talk through everything with you and see how we can support your efforts.

Anti-Racism Team	Focused on anti-racist work and offering many opportunities for the congregation to get involved, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-racist book group• Small group programs such as Knotty Conversations, Widening the Circle of Concern, and anti-racist role-playing workshops.• Annual anti-racist vigils marking the anniversary of George Floyd's death	Thea Iberall, Arnold Kalmbach, Becca Kornet, Margaret Rolph, Jeanette Ruyle
Blood Drive	Annual event to honor Fritz Fleischmann	Sara Drumm
Chaplains on the Way	Program helping unhoused people in Waltham. FPUU congregants can donate clothing, blankets, and other needed items. https://www.chaplainsontheway.us	Louise Rachin

Dignity Matters	Program providing feminine sanitary products, bras, and underwear to women and girls in need. Collection box outside the front door of the U House. https://www.dignity-matters.org	Becca Kornet
Family Promise Metrowest	Program providing housing and meals to families experiencing homeless. Primary opportunity for congregants is to prepare meals, then serve to and eat with the families at the center in Natick (orientation required). Other opportunities, some not requiring orientation, are also available. https://www.familypromisemetrowest.org	Becca Kornet
Green Sanctuary Committee	FPUU is a UUA "Green Sanctuary Congregation." The Green Sanctuary Committee guides the congregation to act on its commitment to environmental justice, care for the Earth, and mitigation of climate change, in terms of learning, making choices, and taking action.	Jeanette Ruyle
LGBTQI Luncheon Program	FPUU, in collaboration with HESCCO and the LGBT Aging Project, has sponsored the Meeting House Cafe Lunch Club for LGBT Seniors, Friends & Allies in the vestry one Monday each month. Although the Lunch Club is currently on hiatus, plans are underway to start up again.	Louise Rachin
Medfield Food Cupboard	Program providing food to local residents facing food insecurity. https://www.medfieldfoodcupboard.com	Membership and Outreach Committee (Jess Razza and Martha Holt Castle)
New Life Furniture Bank of MA	Program providing gently used household furnishings to individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness. (Formal relationship under development) https://newlifefb.org	Jeanette Ruyle
Walk for Hunger	Annual event in May to raise money to help those facing food insecurity. Will hopefully start up again in 2023. Congregants can walk and/or make a financial donation to Team First Parish. https://www.projectbread.org/the-walk-for-hunger	Louise Rachin
Wayside Pulpit Ministry	Wooden structure outside the North Street door of the church that holds statements we want to share with the public.	Jeanette Ruyle, Susan Stromgren, Martha Holt Castle

SJI members: Thea Iberall, Arnold Kalmbach, Becca Kornet (chair), Margaret Rolph, and Jeanette Ruyle

