

# The Grace of Giving

May 2017

Dear Church,

*Where there is no vision, the people perish. Proverbs 29:18*

Since my first year with you, I have encouraged us to dream big, to imagine how we may become the most vibrant, faithful Christian community we can be and then to ask for what resources we need to head in that direction. In the beginning, this made people nervous. And yet, the number and amount of pledges have increased every year. Some of the things we hoped for (a grand piano, a large-screen TV, an industrial dishwasher, a conventional dishwasher, furniture) just came to us, for free, out of the blue. Theologically, I interpret those as gifts of the Holy Spirit, honoring our shared ministry here. God has been very good to United Parish.

This year is no different. Our ministry teams have dreamed us into the future. And the requests ended up being \$155K above our current revenue. It can be daunting when you start dreaming out loud!

Our Stewardship and Budget Ministry Team has faithfully come up with a proposed budget that is within our reach. To achieve our goal, we need 100% pledging participation from all the people who share in our life together. We are also seeking a 15% increase in overall giving.

As Paul reminds us in his letter to Corinth, there is a grace in giving. As you look over this brochure and think about how United Parish graces your life, please consider how you can contribute. If you haven't pledged before, please give it a try. If you are already pledging, I invite you to consider whether you can increase your giving by even ½ percent or more.

I am continually grateful to be a part of this loving and justice-seeking community. It is exciting to be dreaming forward with you.

In faith,

Kent

*But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this **grace of giving**.*

*2 Corinthians 8:7*



**Save the Date!**

*Join us for worship and  
a celebratory lunch on  
Consecration Sunday,  
May 21*



UNITED PARISH IN BROOKLINE

American Baptist | United Church of Christ | United Methodist

## EXALTING in worship

We worship God boldly, quietly and creatively. Together, we remember the source of our being and our deepest sacred values. We are children, youth, adults, visitors, choirs of all ages, the occasional drummer, trombone and cello player. We are ushers, greeters and liturgists...

*We are all ministers creating worship together.*



I give to United Parish because I feel so blessed. Blessed to live in safety, to have a job I'm passionate about, to have a loving family. And blessed to have found a community - a church family - that inspires me to live deeper into God's plan for me and offers me so many opportunities to be God's hands in the needy world.

**Holly VandeWall, Exalting Convener**

## GATHERING in community

We welcome visitors and connect newcomers. We create fellowship and strengthen our bonds to one another. We offer coffee hour, potlucks, all-church retreats and youth retreats. We are the 20/30 Vision Group, Growing Grandparents, the Strawberry Festival, Hearts and Hands, game nights, website communications, outside banners, Dinners for Eight...

*We are a community that joins together as one body.*



Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." When we are gathered around a campfire on retreat, around a table at a potluck, or over a mug of coffee following worship, I feel the love of God in our fellowship together. This spirit is our gift and fostering its growth is our call.

**Stefan Reed, Gathering Co-Convener**



## DEEPENING in Christian faith

We pray and study. We increase our knowledge and strengthen our spirits. We do this in Church School, Bible studies, prayer groups, Lenten discussion groups, youth pilgrimages, parents of teens discussion groups...

*We are people growing together in faith.*



My pledge grows yearly as I see my connection to the community and all it offers deepening. I feel grateful to have a community for my diverse family. I am glad for a place for my heart to evolve and my feet can follow my heart. All the pieces are needed: Heart, Action and Financial Support. That is why I pledge.

**Rachel Silverman, Adult Deepening Ministry Team**

## STRETCHING into justice

We build a vibrant network of concerned citizens, activists and caregivers determined to increase God's kind of fairness in the community and around the world. We work to End Mass Incarceration and support local and international causes. We are committed to the Martin Luther King Day of Services, and Walk for Hunger. We run Thrifty Threads, GeenUP, the Thanksgiving Community Dinner...

*We seek to serve the world around us.*



United Parish has provided a friendly and classy Thanksgiving dinner for 34 years. Immigrant families, elderly folks who live alone, the homeless, the truly hungry, newcomers to the neighborhood, the curious, and others attend. The feedback we get is that our guests are truly thankful. I am proud to serve them.

**David Flanagan, Thanksgiving Dinner Coordinator**

# STEWARDING our resources

We take good and faithful care of what has been entrusted to us – our buildings and grounds, our endowment funds, and our hard-working staff who serve this community and enrich our souls. We provide space for local educational and artistic groups. . .

*We minister faithfully today and, with grace, plan for the future.*



We want our children someday to look back and say that their spiritual and church lives were the basis for who they have become.. We believe that their spiritual lives have been enriched by choir, Sunday School, Rite 13, retreats, Walk for Hunger and so many other experiences that United Parish has provided.

**David Trumble, Buildings and Grounds Convener**

## United Parish Staff

Kent French	Senior Pastor
Susan DeSelms	Minister of Music
Trey Pratt	Assistant Music Director
Lindsey Franklin	Seminarian
Marla Walters	Communications & Office Administrator
Fred Pineau	Facilities Manager
Joe Hickson	Sexton
Armen Khachatourian	Business & Accounting Administrator
Katie Hodgkins	Lead Nursery Worker

## 2017 Stewardship and Budget Ministry Team

Lexi Boudreaux	Discernment and Engagement, Chancel Choir
Kate Ewen	Church School, Discernment and Engagement
Dot Gorenflo	Stretching into Justice, Ushers
Doug Johnson	Growing Grandparents, Chancel Choir
Henry McCorkle	20/30s Vision, Communications Team
Paul Quackenbush	Ending Mass Incarceration
David Rockwell	Treasurer, Carolers Children's Choir
Tyler Smith	20/30s Vision
Mary Townsend	20/30s Vision
Kent French	Senior Pastor