

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Parish in Brookline Receives National Grant Funding

Brookline, MA, December 6, 2023 - United Parish in Brookline has received a \$250,000 matching grant from the National Fund for Sacred Places, a program of Partners for Sacred Places in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

United Parish is one of 16 organizations to receive a grant this year from this highly competitive program that provides over \$3.5 million in funding, training, technical assistance and capacity-building support to congregations of all faiths.

Senior Pastor Kent French expressed his gratitude saying “United Parish is a spiritual and physical resource for many people and organizations in Coolidge Corner and beyond. Our building is one of our biggest assets in helping us serve our neighbors. And like many grand, old buildings, it costs a lot to maintain it as a welcoming, vibrant space. Over the past year, we learned that we need to invest upwards of \$10 million in structural capital improvements, and our congregation is looking forward to new partnerships in meeting this need. This grant is the first big step in a long-range plan to keep our building sound and safe and our wider welcome vibrant and real.”

United Parish in Brookline describes itself as a bold, progressive ecumenical experiment that has thrived for 53 years, since three local congregations came together in 1970, born out of the friendship of their three pastors. It has ties to three Protestant denominations: American Baptist Church-USA, United Methodist, and United Church of Christ. Since its founding, the merged congregation has made its home in the beautiful, historic Harvard Congregational Church building, designed by noted 19th century architect Edward Tuckerman Potter.

In addition to being an architectural landmark in the community, United Parish is a center point for community action. The church is home to its own volunteer-run Thrifty Threads, the town's only non-profit thrift shop, as well as the Brookline Food Pantry. Throughout the year, United Parish hosts around 35 community groups, including Artbarn Community Theater, Boy Scout Troop 6, the Brookline Community Development Corporation, Handel+Haydn Youth Choruses, New England Philharmonic, various arts organizations and interfaith partners.

The rainbow-colored Adirondack chairs on the front lawn represent the congregation's commitment to radical welcome and have become a beloved gathering space in town. The congregation has multiple relationships and collaborations with local Jewish

synagogues, Muslim neighbors, and the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, with which they are actively advocating for affordable housing policy in Massachusetts. In 2021, United Parish founded the Negro Spiritual Royalties Project, an active justice endeavor that has garnered national attention and inspired other congregations to replicate it around the country.

United Parish is at a critical juncture that impacts its ability to continue to be a welcoming, vibrant hub in the community. Over the past two years, the congregation commissioned several studies to understand better the scope of necessary capital improvements. The final study, from April 2022, revealed needs totaling approximately \$10 million over 15 years. The National Fund for Sacred Places Grant will help the church complete the first phase of repairing its bell tower, which has become hazardous with falling parts of its facade. This repair will allow the church to re-open its main entrance and belltower, so its bell can ring out once again through the neighborhood.

The grant requires United Parish to raise \$500,000 in matching funds. If you'd like to help us reach our goal, please donate [here](#).

About the National Fund for Sacred Places

Now in its eighth year, the National Fund has awarded or pledged over \$21.5 million to 113 community-serving congregations in 39 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. So far, this grantmaking has resulted in over \$3 leveraged for every grant dollar invested in participating congregations. To learn more about this program and this year's grant recipients, visit <https://fundforsacredplaces.org/>.

About United Parish in Brookline

United Parish is a vibrant, ecumenical, open and affirming congregation in the United Methodist, American Baptist and United Church of Christ traditions. Located in the heart of Coolidge Corner in Brookline, United Parish operates a volunteer-run thrift shop, Thrifty Threads, and is also home to around 35 community organizations including the Brookline Food Pantry, Artbarn Community Theater, Boy Scout Troop 6, Brookline Community Development Corporation, Handel+Haydn Youth Choruses, New England Philharmonic, and various support groups.

<https://www.unitedparishbrookline.org/>

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