

The Provident FRIEND

News from the Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

March 21, 2017

Announcing a New Format

The PMM Communications Committee is trying out a new HTML format that will let you read the newsletter straight from your email - no more clicking through to download a print-formatted PDF. You can now use links to navigate within the electronic newsletter, and to access information on external websites. This format will also allow us to include photos and even videos. The hope is that this new format will better meet the needs of our membership and perhaps increase the number of those who read the newsletter each month. If you'd like to share feedback with the editor, or if you'd like to switch from the paper version to the new electronic format, please email ProvidentFriend@providencefriends.org.

Peace and Social Concerns Presents

[A Talk on the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund](#)

Please join Diane Dicranian, of Winthrop Center Friends Church, ME, for a potluck dinner and presentation at the Providence Meetinghouse at 6:30 pm on Saturday, March 25. Her talk highlights the work being done by the Olympia (WA) Monthly Meeting to support the resettlement of members of the Uganda LGBTQ community and their allies, whose lives and livelihoods were jeopardized in the wake of Uganda's 2014 Anti-Homosexuality Act. Diane will discuss the current situation in Uganda and the work of the [Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund](#). As of 2/25/2017, FUSTF has helped 1,859 individuals to escape from Uganda: 1,845 LGBTQ adults, six allies, and eight children. Come learn how you can help with this important work. All are welcome. The talk is free—please bring food to share, and come ready to listen and learn. (For more information, visit <http://friendsugandansafetransport.org>.)

Keeping in Touch with PMM

Our Meeting has three main tools for keeping members and attenders informed. Communications Committee maintains a list of contact information (phone, address, and email) in a Meeting Directory, which is periodically updated and serves as a reference for connecting members to one another. If you wish to stay current on all Meeting activities and events, please subscribe to our Listserv, which lists all announcements and updates and is the most efficient way to reach the wider Meeting community. (Emails to the listserv should be sent to Providence_Quakers@yahoo.com.) Finally, we maintain a "Newsletter Only" list, for those who wish to keep their emails to a minimum; this list exclusively receives the monthly Provident Friend. To find out more or to add yourself to any of these resources, please contact Dan Lederer.

CALENDAR

Saturday, March 25

6:30 pm, Providence Meetinghouse

[Diane Dicranian Speaks on Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund \(FUSTF\)](#)

Sunday, March 26

3 pm, Providence Meetinghouse

Shape Note Singing

Saturday, April 1

(time/locations TBA)

[Friendly Eights](#)

Sunday, April 2, 11 am

Providence Meetinghouse Potluck

Saturday, April 8, 9:30 – 4pm

Moses Brown School

[NEYM Living Faith Gathering](#)

Sunday, April 9, 12 pm

Providence Meetinghouse Meeting for Business

Friday, April 21

1:30 pm, Masjid Al-Rahman 18 Dunnell Ln, Pawtucket, RI 02860

Fellowship with Muslim Neighbors

Thursday, April 27

6:30 - 8:30 pm, Moses Brown School Alumni Hall

["Evening of Advocacy"](#)

Sunday, May 7, 3-5 pm

Location TBA

FCNL Capital Campaign

Reception with Diane Crandall

Third Wednesdays (monthly)

6 pm, Saylesville

Meetinghouse

Worship and singing

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, Minutes, 12th of 3rd Month, 2017

1. We gathered at 12:05 pm at the Providence meetinghouse, with seventeen present. In the opening worship the clerk read the following queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*:
 - Does our Meeting encourage the ministry of both word and deed? How does our Meeting recognize, develop, and nurture the gifts of our members and attenders of all ages?
 - Does our Meeting prepare all its members and children for worship and for a way of life consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends? How do we teach about Quaker practices in business and worship and their importance to the functioning of our Meeting community?
 - In what ways do we support each other in order to seek God's will and act upon our understanding of truth? Is there opportunity in our Meeting to share the excitement of religious discovery and the possibility of religious transformation?
2. Announcements:

NEYM will be holding a Living Faith Day Event at Moses Brown School on 8th of 4th month from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm. Specifics can be found in the recent listserve mailing or at the NEYM web site (www.neym.org).

At 6:30 pm on the 25th of 3rd month, Diane Dicranian of Winthrop Center (ME) Friends Church will make a presentation at the Providence meetinghouse about her ministry working with the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund, which provides support for the LGBTQ community in Uganda. Hosted by Adult Religious Education and Peace & Social Concerns Committees. A potluck supper will precede her talk.

3. Membership: Ministry and Counsel recommends that Ingrid Werge be accepted into membership in the meeting, following the usual clearness process. We approve. A suitable welcome will be arranged.
4. State of the Society Report: Ministry and Counsel has brought a draft State of Society report for our consideration. After some revisions, we approve the following report:

PROVIDENCE MONTHLY MEETING STATE OF SOCIETY REPORT FOR 2016

In reflecting on the past year, members of Providence Meeting find themselves in unity in some areas but divided about others.

We are very grateful for the sense of loving community that we have and for the opportunity to come together in worship. We feel particularly blessed to have many young families; the energy and enthusiasm of the First Day School children is very welcome. Providing an appropriate program for older children is a challenge that we do not yet meet as successfully as we could wish. Gathering for food and fellowship after worship is important to our support of one another.

We vary in our perception of the quality of our worship. Although some Friends feel a strong sense of spiritual fulfillment, others rarely sense that the Meeting is truly gathered. There is concern that messages often seem superficial and/or overly influenced by politics. Some members may still be struggling to find a place in the Friends' style of worship. We note that our welcome of visitors, although sincere, is somewhat lacking in guidance, possibly discouraging some from returning. Although we don't want to be pushy, we could do better

at drawing newcomers into our spiritual fellowship.

There is a widely-expressed hunger among both newer and more experienced members and attenders for opportunities to study and discuss the writings and traditions of Friends. We would like to offer something along the lines of Quakerism 101 more regularly, and also to establish study groups for reading and discussion.

Friends would like to improve our sense of connectedness to one another in a variety of ways. Suggestions included not only study groups, but also reviving Friendly Eights dinners and acting together in ways that serve the wider community.

We feel less than successful in acting together outside our own community. Because our members and attenders live spread over a large geographical area including three different states, we do not have a strong sense of community involvement as a Meeting, although individual members are led to serve the world in many ways.

We have welcomed recent efforts by some members, including our First Day School children, to lead us in opportunities to serve. We have strengthened links with Muslim and Jewish communities in our area, assisted refugees, and participated as a meeting in Providence Pride Day. We desire to do more as a Meeting to work for social justice, possibly under the leadership of the Peace and Social Concerns committee. We are aware that most of us are isolated from many social ills and that our service needs to be accompanied by greater understanding.

Briefly, the state of our society is this. We are united in gratitude for our loving community. We feel called to do God's work in the world but do not see our path clearly. We desire to deepen our understanding of the way of Friends.

We thank Ministry and Counsel for its careful listening and drafting process.

We note some ongoing concerns about the dynamics of the first fifteen minutes of our corporate worship, and ask Ministry and Counsel to consider these further.

5. Ministry and Counsel recommends that we establish a standing committee to have oversight of the nursery and child care (including child care during business meeting and other activities). This responsibility has been handled informally by one or two people, and our current large number of small children requires more organization. We approve this recommendation.
6. The Treasurer presented an interim report for the third quarter, ending 2/28/2017. Contributions are running ahead of last year, other income items are on track, and the expenses are as expected. The contributions include a one-time donation from a Friend outside this meeting, which the Finance Committee has included as a general donation.

A concern was raised about whether the meeting should divest from holding its bank account at Citizens Bank, because of the bank's financial involvement in funding fracking and the Dakota Access Pipeline. We ask the Finance Committee and the Peace and Social Concerns Committee to consider this question, and bring any recommendation back to meeting for business.

7. For the Finance Committee, Dan Lederer presented a preliminary draft budget for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2017. Friends with questions or concerns were encouraged to speak to Finance Committee members. A revised proposal will be brought back for discernment next month.

8. For the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, Jennifer McFadden reported on the committee's consideration of the meeting providing sanctuary for immigrants facing deportation. The RI Council of Churches is expecting that deportations will increase in the coming months. The committee's sense is that this meetinghouse is not well suited to provide physical sanctuary, because of the lack of bathing facilities or a continual presence of Friends at the meetinghouse. Jen circulated a survey from the Council to determine what other ways Friends may feel called to assist other faith organizations who are providing sanctuary. The committee is also setting up an ad hoc working group on interfaith and refugee issues, to coordinate and discern the work that members have already begun.
9. Saylesville: Paul Klinkman reported that the current preparative meeting clerk has let the meeting know that this will be his final year as clerk, so they are searching for a new clerk and for alternate ways to address issues relating to care of the property. This has raised again the question whether the meeting should be a worship group rather than a preparative meeting. They are in conversation with Ministry and Counsel on that question
10. The meeting closed at 2:00 pm following a period of silent worship, intending to meet next on the 9th of 4th month.

Mike Hirtle, presiding clerk
Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

Dinner and Discussion with Friendly Eights

Mark your calendars for April 1, the date of the next in PMM's series of Friendly Eights--small-group potluck-style dinner parties focused on exploring topics of Quakerly interest. For those who have never taken part in one of these Friendly discussions, they are a great opportunity to deepen relationships with people in the PMM community and to explore Quaker faith and practice together. Since all groups discuss the same queries, it's also a way for lots of people to take part in a common conversation. If you'd like to participate, please contact [Ariana Steele](#) to be connected to a group as a host or a guest.

PSC Taking Orders for FCNL gear: #Love Thy Neighbor - No Exceptions

The Meetinghouse will soon display large 2 x 12-foot banners on its north and west walls featuring FCNL's "[Love Thy Neighbor - No Exceptions](#)" logo. Friends can also order bumper stickers, buttons (pins), magnets, yard signs (double- and one-sided), and posters. If you'd like some FCNL gear to post on your car, in your yard, on your fridge, or gift to friends, please contact Peace and Social Concerns and let us know--we'll place a large order on behalf of the meeting.

Moses Brown Sophomore Organizes "Evening of Advocacy"

Madeline Kerr, a sophomore at Moses Brown School, has worked with a large committee of faculty and with the MB Head of School to organize an "Evening of Advocacy." The event will take place on Thursday, April 27th, from 6:30 to 8:30, in the Alumni Hall at Moses Brown School.

The purposes are of the event are:

1. To raise awareness of local immigration issues.
2. To deepen our understanding of advocacy and the signing of an advocacy banner.
3. To offer support for the "Protecting Girls' Access to Education" bill being introduced in the 115th Congress by Rep. Steve Chabot of Ohio.
4. To show solidarity with and support for the Refugee Dream Center of Providence.

Speakers will include Cecily Zeigler, an immigration lawyer and co-clerk of the Moses Brown Board of Trustees and Omar Bah, the Executive Director of the Dream Center.

Providence Meeting has been invited to supply a speaker for a short five- to ten-minute talk about how Quakers have been involved in Immigration and Refugee issues over time. This is a great opportunity for us at the Meeting to get involved in the life of Moses Brown and to support a cause that is "right up our street". A minimum voluntary donation of \$5 per person is suggested to help support the Dream Center.

The Arts Section: Events featuring Friends and friends

Rhode Island Civic Chorale Concert

Rebecca Leuchak invites all to attend the Rhode Island Civic Chorale concert this coming Saturday, March 25th at 7:30 at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Providence which will feature the winners of the Annual Collegiate Vocal Competition as soloists, and a work commissioned by RICCO for its 60th anniversary by Emmy Award winning composer, Roger Cichy, based upon the Langston Hughes poem, "I Dream a World." There will be a meet the artists reception with food and wine after the concert. Rebecca has discount tickets at \$20 each (regular price is \$30, with students always \$10 at the door.) They can be waiting for you and paid for at the door. Call Rebecca at 401-941-4776 or send an email to rleuchak@gmail.com to reserve or for information.

Brown University Chorus Collaboration:
Bach's Matthäus-Passion

On Friday, April 7th at 7:30 PM at Providence's Grace Church, 175 Mathewson St., the Brown University Chorus will be joined by the Schola Cantorum of Boston, members from three treble choirs in Boston and Providence, and two orchestras of period instruments to perform Bach's St Matthew Passion. Three of the aria singers are Brown chorus alumns, and the part of the Evangelist will be sung by Simon Wall, who comes from Westminster Abbey to perform with us. This concert will benefit an upcoming tour by the chorus to Croatia, so there is a charge for it. More information and advance ticket purchases can be found [here](https://payment.brown.edu/C20460_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=2093&SINGLESTORE=true) (https://payment.brown.edu/C20460_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=2093&SINGLESTORE=true)

Literary Notes: Reflections on the Poem "In Flanders Fields"

by Dan Lederer

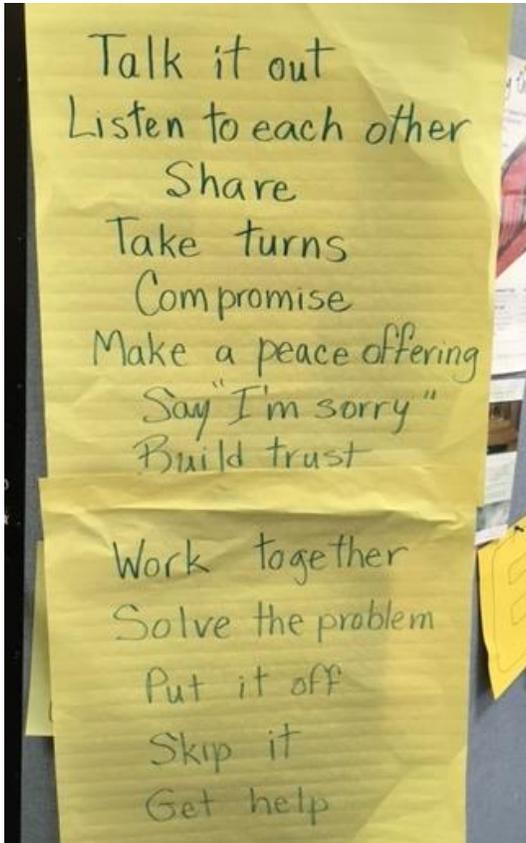
*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
 Between the crosses, row on row,
 That mark our place; and in the sky
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The torch; be yours to hold it high.
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders fields.*

I came across this well-known poem again in a medical journal, there because the poet, John McCrae, was a physician in the Canadian Army during WWI. He wrote the poem the day after a friend was killed in Ypres, France, in May 1915. McCrae himself died in France 3 years later from pneumonia and meningitis.

While the poem documents the horrors of war, the last stanza can be seen as a call to arms, and in fact the poem was used as a rallying cry in Canada and the U.S. for purposes of recruitment and selling war bonds. The concept of continuing to fight because of the human capital already expended has often led to perpetuation of wars, Vietnam perhaps being the most recent of many disturbing examples. It's discouraging, but we must keep trying to find ways to break out of this cycle.



Wisdom from Downstairs

In a time when conflict seems to be everywhere, our First Day Schoolers' discernment on conflict resolution might be helpful to Friends of all ages. Here are their suggestions for peaceful strategies:

- Talk it out
- Listen to each other
- Take turns
- Compromise
- Make a peace offering
- Say "I'm sorry"
- Build trust
- Work together
- Solve the problem
- Put it off
- Skip it
- Get help

Thanks to all our young contributors for this sound and timely advice!

Provident Monthly Meeting Contact List

Presiding Clerk: **Mike Hirtle** clerk@providencefriends.org
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 Finance: **Dan Lederer** finance@providencefriends.org
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 Social & Hospitality: **Dede Carlsten and Kim Wiegand**
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 Email list moderator: **Dan Lederer** list@providencefriends.org
 Website: **webclerk@providencefriends.org**
 Moses Brown School Liaison: **Betsy Zimmerman** liaison@providencefriends.org
 Young Adult Friends: (To Be Named) **yaf@providencefriends.org**
 To schedule the Meetinghouse: **Bruce Shaw** scheduling@providencefriends.org
 AFSC SENE: **Martha Yager** (508) 399-6699 or myager@afsc.org
 Adult Religious Education: **Zona Douthit** adulted@providencefriends.org



Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

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Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut: 10:30 am(Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown)
First Day School, Providence - Sunday. Children join Meeting for Worship from 10:00-10:15 am and then proceed to First Day School from 10:15-11:00 am.

Other Meetings for Worship (All welcome):

Monday - 12:30pm - Moses Brown Upper School

Tuesday - 7pm - Young Adult Friends
(yaf@providencefriends.org)

Wednesday - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

Wednesday - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

Wednesday - 10-11:30am 2nd & 4th Wed's - Saylesville

Thursday - Noon-12:45 pm Brown University in
J. Walter Wilson room 411

Potluck, Providence - each First Sunday

Sing-along, Saylesville – 11:30 am each First Sunday

Meeting for Business

Providence: Second Sunday of each month at 12:00pm

Saylesville: Second Sunday of each month at 9:30am

AFSC SENE Support Committee - Second Tuesday, 6:00-8:00 pm Call (508) 399-6699

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