

The Provident FRIEND

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

January 17, 2018

FDS Resumes Collection for Refugees

Our First Day School children are beginning a service project to collect personal health items, school supplies, and kitchen items to create kits for refugees served by AHOPE. Please bring donations to the table in our gathering room downstairs. Please contact [Eugenia Marks](#) for more information.

Legal and Medical End-of-Life Planning Seminar, Jan. 28

Pastoral Care will be offering a seminar with Zona Douthit and John Stively on the legal and medical aspects of end-of-life planning. On Sunday, January 28th at 11:45 am, they'll offer useful advice on how families can face these difficult but necessary challenges. Please join them!

Preserving Peace in Korea: Local FCNL Advocacy Team Launches Postcard Campaign

With recent news of tensions between the U.S. and North Korea and the potential those tensions have to result in war on the Korean peninsula, the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and our local Advocacy Team are focusing their efforts on preventing such a war. We are reiterating our Peace Testimony to our members of Congress. Please join us downstairs during coffee hour in writing postcards to them. For more information on this project, please contact Nancy Houston.

CALENDAR

Friday, January 19
1:30 pm, Fellowship with Muslim neighbors
Masjid Al Kareem
39 Haskins Ave., Providence
Come if you can to share cookies, coffee and tea!

Saturday, January 20
10 am-12:15, Saylesville
Meetinghouse Bookswap

Friday, January 26 - Sunday, January 28
NEYM JYM Retreat: My Soul Finds its Wings in Music
[Click here to register](#)

Sunday, January 28
11:45 am, [Legal and Medical End-of-life Planning Seminar](#)
with Zona Douthit and John Stively
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, February 4
11 am, PMM Monthly Potluck, Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, February 11
12 pm, PMM Business Meeting, Providence Meetinghouse

April 14, 2018
NEYM Living Faith Gathering
Portland, ME (Registration begins in March)

* community arts/general interest events

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
14th of 1st Month – MINUTES**

1. We gathered at 12:10 pm at the Providence meetinghouse, with 19 present. In the opening worship the clerk read the following queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*: Are our meetings for worship held in stilled, expectant waiting upon God? As we worship is there a living silence in which we are drawn together by the power of God in our midst? Is the spirit of our worship together one that nurtures all worshipers? How does our meeting respond when the vocal ministry seems inappropriate, or when the meeting for worship is consistently not gathered?

2. Announcements.

The NEYM Legacy Gift Fund committee has granted our request for a donation directed towards helping to fund the lift in our planned building expansion. We have received their grant of \$10,000.

We have submitted a request to the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund for similar assistance related to the building expansion.

Our ministry and counsel committee is beginning the process of creating our state of the meeting report to submit to New England Yearly Meeting. We will be looking for input and advice from Friends in the coming weeks.

3. Ministry and Counsel is requesting input on the recent temporary change of practice related to latecomers entering meeting. (See 10th mo. 2017 minute 4.) Friends offered a number of observations and reflections. Some have appreciated the new flexibility, while others have found it disruptive. Suggestions were offered on arrangements that might meet both the needs of latecomers and the needs of those who arrive early and appreciate an opportunity to settle into worship without distractions. These comments will go back to Ministry and Counsel, which expects to bring a proposal to a future business meeting after further discernment.

4. **Fundraising confidentiality.** The fundraising subcommittee of the building expansion committee has requested guidance related to the confidentiality of gifts to the meeting. The current practice has been that all gifts to the meeting are entirely confidential, with only the Treasurer aware of who donates and how much. That is making it difficult for the fundraising committee to discern who to approach and in what way. There is no consideration of publicizing gifts widely; the question is whether a few other individuals (such as the clerk and clerk of finance

committee) can be given access to the information.

Friends offered a variety of comments. A number of Friends felt that wider knowledge of who gives and how much might lead to judgments and disrupt the unity and equality within the meeting community, or might lead to undue pressure to donate beyond what a person discerns is right for them. We may be better off spiritually, and in our relationships with each other, if we maintain our current practice, even if it makes it harder to raise money.

These comments will go back to the fundraising committee for more discernment, with any proposed change in policy to come back to meeting for business for decision.

5. Ministry and Counsel reports that it plans to convene a gathering of all committees, that have any role or responsibility that relates to membership, to meet jointly with the membership recorders to insure that functions related to nurturing members are properly coordinated. This would include Pastoral Care, Communications, Nominating, and Adult Education Committees.

6. For the Library Committee, Rebecca Smith presented a report on the committee's activities over the past year or so. The committee has been preparing a shelf list that could be posted on the meeting's website for Friends' information. The library committee's goal is to make the library useful and welcoming for Friends. The committee has been cataloguing the old books at the Saylesville meetinghouse, with an eye to finding new repositories for the ones we do not see a reason to keep. We receive this report with gratitude for the committee's work.

7. We closed at about 1:45 pm, in grateful silence, intending to meet next the 11th of 2nd month 2018.

Mike Hirtle, clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

Save the Date: NEYM Living Faith Gathering, April 14, Portland, ME

The next Living Faith gathering will be held Saturday, April 14, 2018 in Portland, Maine—and you are invited!

Living Faith is an initiative of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (NEYM) bringing together Quakers from across our region to nourish our faith, grow our communities, and strengthen our witness.

These semiannual, day-long gatherings include large group worship, fellowship and community-building, workshops led by dynamic Friends, an integrated youth program, and opportunities to connect on shared concerns.

Our April 14th Living Faith Gathering will focus on how Friends are living—and can more fully live—our faith in the world, helping to bring about the Beloved Community for all. Through worship, workshops, small groups and more, we will be deepening our capacity to foster the relationships of healing and justice so needed at this time.

Living Faith provides child care for ages infant through 4 years, and a youth program for K through 6th-grade students. Seventh-graders through high-school students can choose to attend the youth program or participate in the adult program and workshops.

In keeping with our Quaker community's commitment to remove barriers to participation, this is a *Pay-As-Led* event.

Registration will open in early March, so save the date—April 14th!

We are looking for Friends interested in leading workshops at the event. We hope to offer a wide range of opportunities that explore and enrich how we share and live our faith, including the social, political, economic and communal dimensions of our spiritual lives.

Interested in leading a workshop? [Click here](#) to learn more and submit a workshop proposal.

Questions? Contact a member of the planning committee at livingfaith@neym.org. We hope to see you there!

The April 2018 Living Faith Planning Team: Lisa Graustein (clerk), Jay O'Hara, Sarah Cushman, Elizabeth Hacala, Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Noah Merrill

January JYM Retreat for Kids Grades 2-6: Jan. 26-28, Wellesley, MA

by Gretchen Baker-Smith
JYM-JHYM Coordinator, NEYM

NEYM's next Junior Yearly Meeting Retreat for youth is coming right up! This event will take place at Wellesley Meeting, January 26-28, 2018. The theme is *My Soul Finds its Wings in Music*.

We will share how we find that of the Divine in music – of all kinds -- and how music helps us to center, give voice, celebrate and open our hearts to experiences of communion together. We'll also leave room for talking about and exploring other ways that our hearts are lifted and opened to the Light.

We begin at 5pm on Fridays, and we wrap up on Sunday at 12:30pm. You can register your child here: <https://neym.org/jym/register/form>

In September, we began a grand experiment adopting the fee structure that New England Quakers adopted for Sessions several years ago. It has been a wonderful success thus far. It's about trust and abundance!

Families can pay depending on their budgets – from giving more that helps to support others to giving zero dollars—no questions asked. We offer up these guidelines if they are helpful in your relection.

- \$45 per child is great if budgets are tight.
- \$90 per child covers food and supply expenses for our weekends.
- \$150 per child covers all related costs to hold the retreat.

\$60 remains absolutely, totally fine -- as does less than that, too. There is always scholarship, including for the full amount. NEYM Friends are fully committed to supporting our youth programs in all needed ways, including financial.

You can quickly and confidentially register for the event here: <https://neym.org/jym/register/form>

NEYM Offers Opportunities to Deepen Engagement with Racial Justice

(with contributions by Lisa Graustein and Honor Woodrow)

Friends in the PMM community and elsewhere are working to address systemic racial injustice and inequality in our society. Below are two opportunities currently offered by NEYM that offer ways to broaden and deepen our involvement with these important issues.

Join Lisa Graustein and NEYM Friends in a Three-Month Course on Racial Justice

How can Quaker practices enhance our practical racial justice skills and build a community committed to the ongoing work of racial justice and healing? Lisa Graustein (Beacon Hill MM, Boston) is offering a 3-month in-person/online racial justice course for Friends in New England. Friends of all levels and ages (high school – elders) are most welcome. Starting with a day-long retreat on March 10th, participants will meet virtually twice a month as a full group and twice a month in small groups, via phone or in person. Co-sponsored by Beacon Hill Friends House, Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, and offered with support from the Legacy Gift Committee of New England Yearly Meeting, this course is pay-as-led and open to all Friends and fellow seekers. More information and a registration form can be found below.

[Learn more and register or email Lisa](#)

Join a Discussion Group on Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship

In the same spirit, several Friends from across New England have been making an effort to learn more about how racism has been a part of the history of Quakerism and supporting each other in reading the book *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice* (written by Donna McDaniel of Framingham [MA] Meeting and Vanessa Jule of Central Philadelphia [PA] Monthly Meeting).

So far there have been two group discussion calls which have focused on what new information we have learned from the first section of the book, and what has felt like it has resonance in our lives as Friends today.

To give you a flavor of what the calls have been like here are some examples of questions we have discussed:

- In the reading, what has surprised you? Is there anything that you find yourself resistant to? Why might that be?
- What prejudices and privileges of this time are guiding you?
- Have you felt the spirit nudging you to something new? How are you responding to or resisting those nudges?

These calls last approximately an hour, happen about once a month, and are open to anyone who feels like they would like to engage in this type of exploration. If you are interested in joining one or more of the calls send Honor Woodrow an e-mail and she will keep you posted with the details.

Thoughts on Loss

by Dan Lederer

A short time back a friend said to me that life could be seen as a series of losses. This first struck me as a rather gloomy assessment, but on thinking about it I realized that there's some truth in what he said. We lose our youth, our innocence, our parents, on and on, and in the end we lose everything, not just possessions or money but, even more valuable, our health, our freedom, and our connections to others.

Everyone experiences disappointments, major and minor, which is to say that there are inevitably times when we lose out, but how we handle these events varies. Our initial response to loss may include grief, fear, anger, and blaming others or ourselves, reactions which are natural and universal. However, when remembrance of losses causes these feelings to persist for months or years, we face the risk of ending up embittered, hateful, isolated, or depressed, and how can a miserable person be a positive force in the world?

So what's the alternative? Every day offers a new opportunity to decide how to view life, and the attitude we choose will determine how we act in general and, more particularly, how we interact with others. Disturbing thoughts may intrude, and it's not easy to turn off one's thoughts, but we can substitute different thoughts. One effective method is to practice gratitude, focusing on the many things we can be grateful for right now. An added benefit is that practicing gratitude can bring our attention to the present moment, a place that's free of regrets about the past and anxiety about the future.

It may help to consider that the good things we have today are the result of all that's happened before, including the losses. If you can accept that idea, then you may find comfort in words attributed to the Sufi mystic Rumi (1207-1273): "Don't grieve. Anything you lose comes around in another form."

Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

Presiding Clerk: **Mike Hirtle** clerk@providencefriends.org
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 Meetinghouse Scheduling: **Bruce Shaw** scheduling@providencefriends.org

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(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut: 10:30 am

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 are welcome):

Monday - 12:30pm - Moses Brown Upper School

Wednesday - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

Wednesday - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

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

Wednesday - 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

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99 Morris Avenue

Providence, RI 02906