

The Provident FRIEND

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

March 21, 2018

Gender Identity 101: An Information Session for Friends, March 25

In planning for Sessions 2016 and 2017, NEYM reflected on how it could better meet the needs of Friends with diverse gender identities. At the time, NEYM published a note on its website that stated, in part, "We recognize a growing understanding among Friends and in our wider society that our mainstream culture's view of gender is too restrictive for many people: a person's sex assigned at birth and their own experience of their gender identity are not necessarily the same thing. We are coming to see that forcing everyone to fit into one of two rigid gender categories ignores the truth of who many Friends in our community really are."

These concerns are relevant to us in Providence as well. On Sunday, March 25, after the rise of meeting, Lucy Churchill will lead our community in a presentation and discussion about gender identity - what it means, why it's important, and what allies can do to support friends of all genders. Bring your questions and come ready to learn! (For more information, NEYM also recommends the resources at genderspectrum.org or the You Tube video, "[Transgender Basics—Gender Identity Project.](#)")

Moses Brown Hosts Community Concert to Support Refugees, Thursday, April 5, 6 pm

From Galen Hamann, Director of Friends Education, Moses Brown School

We hope you will join the Moses Brown community for a special concert on April 5th. For years we have had a Spring tea to gather Providence Monthly Meeting Friends and Moses Brown F/friends. This year we wanted to do something different that might draw together a wider community--other New England Friends and Providence community Friends. Rebecca Leuchak and I had the idea of a community concert in MB's new Woodman Family Community Center two years ago at Sessions when we heard Peter Blood and Annie Patterson leading Friends in song. (You can get a sampling of their music [here.](#)) In collaboration with the Peace and Social Action committee, we have decided to make this a benefit concert to support the work of our friends at AHOPE who are supporting refugees in our community.

So please mark your calendar, invite your F/friends, come experience the Woodman Family Community Center, sing songs that will lift your spirits and build community, and enjoy the musical gifts of Annie and Peter. The first set will be at 6pm and the second at 7:30. We hope to have folks selling middle eastern food if you need dinner or a snack. Children under 17 are free, as are refugees. If you know or work with a refugee family, please invite them to come with you! If you have questions or want to help in any way, please contact Galen at ghamann@mosesbrown.org.

CALENDAR

Saturday, March 17

10 am-12:15, Saylesville Meetinghouse Bookswap

Friday, March 23

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

Sunday, March 25

11:15 am, Gender Identity 101: An Information Session for Friends
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, April 1

11:15 am, PMM Monthly Potluck, Providence Meetinghouse

Thursday, April 5

6 pm, Hope & Strength: Peter Blood and Annie Patterson's Community Concert to Benefit AHOPE
Sponsored by Moses Brown and Supported by Providence Friends
Woodman Center, Moses Brown School
[Click here for more information or to buy tickets in advance](#)

Sunday, April 8

12 pm, PMM Business Meeting, Providence Meetinghouse

Saturday, April 14

NEYM Living Faith Gathering
Portland, ME [\(Click here for more information and to register\)](#)

Sunday, April 22

PMM Expansion Groundbreaking Ceremony

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Minutes, 11th of 3rd Month, 2018

1. We gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at 12:05 pm, with 21 present. During opening worship, Friends had an opportunity to review the following queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*, which had been read during meeting for worship:

Spiritual Nurture, Ministry, and Religious Education

- 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's next "Living Faith" Gathering will be held 14th of 4th Month in Portland, Maine.

Quarterly Meeting will be held on the 18th of this month at Worcester Friends Meeting.

Moses Brown School will be hosting a week of advocacy on behalf of refugees, including a family benefit concert by Peter and Annie Blood-Patterson on April 5. The Peace and Social Action Committee agreed to co-sponsor the concert, and encourages all Friends to attend,

3. Correspondence

We have received a letter from Moses Brown granting approval for digging on their portion of the property related to our building expansion project.

We have received a check from Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund in the amount of \$15,000 in support of our building expansion project. The clerk has responded with a letter of thanks.

4. Elsie Morse, the meeting recorder, presented the membership statistical report as of year-end 2017. It is difficult to keep track of which children are junior members. Some of the other categories would be more useful if they included both members and attenders. We note a new category in the NEYM form this year, for persons "identifying with other gender identities." A question was raised whether it would be useful to have a membership committee with oversight over all questions of membership; this may be discussed by Ministry and Counsel. A copy of the report will be attached to the record copy

of these minutes.

5. For Ministry and Counsel, Ariana Steele brought a recommendation that Sally Freestone be accepted into membership, following the usual clearness process. We approve. Paul Graseck agreed to coordinate an appropriate welcome for her.

6. Ministry and Counsel has brought a draft of the annual State of the Society report. Some minor typographical suggestions were offered. We find the content of the report clear, well-organized, and an accurate reflection of the life of the meeting. We approve this report, with leeway to Ministry and Counsel to make minor editorial changes.

7. The Library Committee has brought a request for approval to deaccession some 200 old books from a cabinet at the Saylesville meetinghouse. The committee has inventoried these books, few of which are suitable for the meeting's current needs. They expect to look for suitable repositories for these items. The committee asks for authority to dispose of them appropriately, rather than business meeting approving each individual item. We approve, with thanks to the Library Committee. We also approve the Library Committee conducting a similar inventory and deaccessioning of older books at the Providence meetinghouse, as way may open.

8. In the absence of the treasurer, Dan Lederer presented the treasurer's financial report for the third quarter of the fiscal year, ending February 28, 2018. Contributions are slightly above the prior year figure. This does not include donations restricted for the building expansion. We have withdrawn \$300,000 from the NEYM Pooled Funds, which has been moved into cash reserves for payment of expenses relating to the building expansion. An additional \$300,000 is expected to be withdrawn later this year for the balance of the project.

He noted that the Providence electric bill has been much higher than anticipated, because of use of the heat exchanger units in the meeting room. In theory, these are reducing gas usage. The overage exceeds what the treasurer is authorized to pay. The Finance Committee requests permission for the treasurer to exceed the budgeted figure by up to \$800 as needed to cover electric bills as incurred for the balance of the year. We approve.

9. For the Finance Committee, Dan Lederer presented a draft budget for FY 2019, for comments. The expanded building is likely to require increases in operating and maintenance costs, including an increase in the maintenance reserve. It will take at least a year to know precisely what the new expenses will be. At the same time, we will need to withdraw a significant amount from General Fund reserves, reducing undesignated investment income for the foreseeable future. These changes were anticipated at the time we reached clarity to move forward with the expansion. The committee is recommending prudent cuts to a number of other items to partially offset these changes. The budget as presented would require general contributions increasing by about one-third, to about \$73,000. In

theory that should be manageable given the size of our membership and attendance, although we recognize that not all Friends are able to contribute significantly.

A question was raised whether the meeting needs to continue covering operating costs for the Saylesville meetinghouse, and whether Ruggiero bequest could be used to cover routine operating expenses for the Saylesville meetinghouse. The Finance Committee noted that the bequest is restricted to maintenance rather than operating costs. The Treasurer's policy is to draw from the bequest fund for any expenses that fit within the terms of the bequest. The ad hoc committee to consider the future of the Saylesville meetinghouse is exploring many options and will be reporting shortly. In the meantime, pending any further decisions, it seems prudent to continue to exercise good stewardship over the building.

It may be possible to increase the income from use of both meetinghouses, if adequate volunteers come forward to have oversight of that use.

Friends were encouraged to forward additional comments and concerns to the Finance Committee, which will bring a revised proposal for approval next month.

9. No other business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship 2:20 pm, intending to meet next on the 8th of 4th month, God willing.

Mike Hirtle, clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

Invitation to Building Expansion Groundbreaking, April 22

From Rebecca Leuchak

Groundbreaking is an adjective – describing something innovative, pioneering or that has never been done before. And groundbreaking is a noun – the term for a ceremony held when construction is started on a new building.

We hope in our new expansion of the Meeting House to be doing both this coming Earth Day, April 22nd. Come celebrate the start of actual construction, a moment we have all been waiting for!

Immediately after our worship, during the “coffee, tea...and thee” hour, we will gather outside (weather permitting) to mark this important moment in the life of our Meeting. It will be fun – with games, songs, and even the chance to shovel a little bit of dirt! (And what’s better than getting a little dirty on Earth Day?) So bring your hardhat and your easy smile and let’s all help to kick off construction!

First Day School Updates, Early 2018

From Eugenia Marks for the Religious Education Committee

First Day School during January considered what it's like to be a refugee. We looked at videos of the storm destruction on Puerto Rico to understand why refugees from the island are arriving in Rhode Island. We read stories, among them one that helped us think about what most meaningful and useful things we would take if we had to fit these things in a suitcase. We heard from Hans-Dieter Gomes about his experience as a refugee. Mayss Bajbouj from AHOPE visited and asked us to consider what it's like to live in a refugee tent city. We packed bags of personal health items and school supplies that were generously donated by our Meeting community. These and your donations of clothing, diapers, and kitchenware were given to AHOPE.

In February, we gave our FDS families each a copy of *A Pathway to Quaker Parenting*, a parenting resource that is based on Quaker testimonies and on query-based self guidance. We are exploring the testimonies of Quakers, beginning with Equality and Equity. We look forward to talking to others in our community about these ideas.

Our older students are reviewing films they find engaging and will be sharing those film experiences with each other. We appreciate the commitment of adults to be able to offer two Sundays a month for early-teen gatherings.



(left) Betsy Zimmerman's drawing of the Providence meetinghouse surrounded by First Day Schoolers' handprints and thoughts. The messages around the outside are kids' reflections on our upcoming meetinghouse expansion and the things they treasure about the meeting. Clockwise from top right, they read: "I will become stronger in my faith!" "Peacefulness, community, working together, meditation" "Service! Pot luck! Committees! First Day School! Making friends! Peace! Worship!"

"There are a lot of new families in our community! We love all the children!" "I will use this space to make good things happen!" "Space for children! Opportunities for our teens! Making connections!" "We are a growing community!" "For me, living in and feeling the love of this community is IMPORTANT!"

Communication with the Meeting

by Dan Lederer

I'm writing on behalf of Communications Committee. We on the committee maintain several means of communication for Friends. One of these is the Meeting Email List, often referred to as "the listserve", which functions as our electronic bulletin board, with notices of upcoming events and other items of interest to Friends. Another is the Meeting Directory, which helps us communicate back and forth; an updated edition of the Meeting Directory comes out every six months, with the next one scheduled for April. Yet another means of communication is this newsletter, *The Provident Friend*, published ten times per year. And finally there's our website, accessible to all at www.providentfriends.org. In order to engage fully in the life of the Meeting, it's helpful to be on the Meeting Email List, to be listed in the Meeting Directory, and to receive the Meeting newsletter. If any of these is not happening for you, please contact me so we can get you on board. I can be reached at dlederer1@verizon.net or at 401-831-0243.

Meetinghouse Photographs On Display

In the summer of 2017, photographer and Framingham-based Quaker Jean Schnell visited and photographed ten New England meetinghouses, including Providence, Saylesville, and Conanicut. Some of these photos are currently being exhibited in a group show at Westport Art Center entitled *Spirituality and Sense of Place: Calm, Reflective, Inspiring*. The show runs from March 9 to March 23. But if you can't make it to the show, you can still see Jean's beautiful photographs – and order some prints of your own, if you like – at www.jeanschnell.com.

Open Position at NEYM

The NEYM Pooled Funds Board of Managers will have an open position. The Board meets five times per year at the Beacon Hill Friends House in Boston, plus it holds a workshop at NEYM Sessions in August. Board members serve a five-year term, which can be renewed once. If you're interested and would like more information, contact Board Clerk Kathy Malin (kmalin@rifoundation.org).

Upcoming Programs at Pendle Hill

For Friends' perusal, here are some of the spring offerings at Pendle Hill in PA:

April 8-12 – Enjoy Pendle Hill in its spring glory, read the synoptic Gospels together with **Doug Gwyn** and **Francisco Burgos** in [*Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Us*](#), and hear Jesus's message anew for 21st century followers.

April 15-19 – In [*Nurturing Faithfulness*](#), a four-day short course with **Marcelle Martin**, experience silence, deep worship, and individual and group practices that enhance awareness, attention, and faithful following of Spirit's leading.

April 21 – Come and creatively play and playfully create in our monthly [Open Studio Session](#), Art Studio, 1:30 to 5:30 pm.

April 28 – Join professional Quaker photographer and teacher **Sharon Gunther** in a daylong exploration of [Framing the Sacred: The Spiritual Journey of Photography](#), 9:30 to 4:00 pm.

May 3-6 – North American Quakers convene to consider [Truth and Healing: Quakers Seeking Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#), Thursday evening through Sunday noon meal. Increase awareness of ongoing intergenerational harms stemming from Doctrine of Discovery, learn what efforts Friends are making to acknowledge and heal wounds, and help discern ways forward for our religious society.

REMINDERS: Young Adult Friends – Apply now for [Continuing Revolution 2018: Building Intentional Lives](#), June 1-6.

Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

Presiding Clerk: **Mike Hirtle** clerk@providencelfriends.org
Assistant Presiding Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** assistclerk@providencelfriends.org
Recording Clerk: **Betsy Cazden** recordingclerk@providencelfriends.org
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Ministry & Counsel: **Ariana Steele** ministryandcounsel@providencelfriends.org
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Finance: **Dan Lederer** finance@providencelfriends.org
Peace & Social Concerns: **Steve Schwartz** peaceandsocial@providencelfriends.org
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Religious Education: **Victoria Ekk and Elsie Morse** religioused@providencelfriends.org
Communications: **Dan Lederer** communications@providencelfriends.org
Program Committee: **Nina Berry** program@providencelfriends.org
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Archive: **archivist@providencelfriends.org**
Property: **Bob Elliott and Nina Berry** property@providencelfriends.org
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Email list moderator: **Dan Lederer** list@providencelfriends.org
Website: **Sam Schifman** webclerk@providencelfriends.org
Moses Brown School Liaison: **Betsy Zimmerman** liaison@providencelfriends.org
Meetinghouse Scheduling: **Bruce Shaw** scheduling@providencelfriends.org



Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

Newsletter of
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

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