

The Provident FRIEND

October 18, 2018

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 14th of 10th Month, 2018

Minutes

Friends gathered at the Saylesville meetinghouse at noon, with 14 present. Presiding clerk Rebecca Leuchak began the period of silent worship by reading the following:

"When it works well, Quaker business process can bring us closer to the Divine and to each other. Quaker business process is a group practical mysticism that opens the worshiping body to the promptings of the Divine."

(from *A Practical Mysticism: How Quaker Process Opens Us to the Promptings of the Divine* by Elizabeth Meyer. Pendle Hill Pamphlet #453, 2018).

2. Announcements.

We are still in need of a new person for scheduling. For more information, speak to Bruce Shaw.

Saturday, October 13 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., Generations Sangha, a Buddhist meditation group, began meeting at the Providence meetinghouse and will continue each second Saturday of the month.

Friday, October 19 to Sunday, October 21 – New England Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends retreat at the Providence Meetinghouse with the theme "Creativity in Spirit." New England Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends (or YAFs for short) are a community of Quakers, typically between the ages of 18 and 35, who are woven into the larger body of New England Yearly Meeting. The YAF community serves as a place for both YAFs new to the Religious Society of Friends and Young Friends who have become adults to build an adult relationship with the yearly meeting. If you have any questions about YAFs, please contact Hilary Burgin, the Young Adult Engagement Coordinator, at Hilary@neym.org

Sunday, October 21 at noon - Paula Palmer will speak on "The Quaker Indian Boarding Schools: Facing our History and Ourselves" at the Providence meetinghouse. A potluck meal precedes the talk

Sunday, October 21 - Quarterly Meeting will be held at Smithfield meetinghouse on the North Smithfield – Woonsocket line. Worship begins at 10:30, to be followed by potluck refreshments and then the business of the Quarter.

Sunday, October 28 at 8:30 a.m. will be the first meeting of the Problem of White Privilege Reading/Discussion Group sponsored by the Peace and Social Action Committee. *Say the Wrong Thing* by Amanda Kemp is the first reading. Books are available from Eugenia Marks. The series continues, meeting each month on the fourth First Day (Sunday) at

CALENDAR

Friday, October 19 - Sunday, October 21

NEYM Young Adult Friends retreat:
"Creativity in Spirit"
Providence Meetinghouse

Saturday, October 20

Bookswap, Saylesville Meetinghouse

Sunday, October 21

12 pm, Talk by Paula Palmer
of Boulder Friends Meeting
"Quaker Indian Boarding Schools:
Facing History and Ourselves"
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, October 21

Smithfield Quarterly Meeting
(Worship begins at 10:30 am, with potluck
and quarterly business to follow)
Smithfield Friends Meeting
108 Smithfield Rd, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Friday, October 26

1:30 pm, Fellowship with
Muslim Neighbors Bring cookies to share,
or just come to share a smile
and good conversation!
Masjid Al Kareem, 39 Haskins St.,
Providence

Sunday, October 28

8:30-10am, Discussion Group on Racism,
PMH Library. Planned reading:
Say the Wrong Thing, by Dr. Amanda
Kemp.

Sunday, November 4

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS
(Remember to set clocks back!)
11:15 am, PMM Monthly Potluck,
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, November 11

12 pm, PMM Business Meeting,
Providence Meetinghouse

Saturday, December 15

5 pm, Holiday Gathering
(followed by potluck)

8:30 a.m.

3. Correspondence.

A letter was received from Emily Provance, a member of the Traveling Ministry Corp of Friends World Committee for Consultation. She sent greetings and mentioned having attended NEYM sessions and meeting Friends from Rhode Island. She noted that she finds our website to be very warm and welcoming.

We have received a correspondence request from Michael McKinney. He is an inmate in the Florida prison system and would like to correspond with someone from the Meeting. Any Friends interested in undertaking such a ministry should contact Rebecca Leuchak.

4. For Ministry and Counsel, Bruce Shaw reported that he has now taken on the clerkship of that committee. Following on Rebecca Leuchak's workshop for committee clerks, M&C will be considering the Meeting's committees.

5. For the Religious Education Committee, Victoria Ekk brought news of plans for the coming year. There are 20 families with 42 children ranging from nursery through teenagers. The committee meets regularly and includes one junior member. The First Day School is exploring the theme of simplicity this year, and the committee has developed a detailed curriculum. There are four members who serve as teachers for First Day School on a regular basis and two Brown students also help with classes. The teachers struggle to maintain a consistent experience for the children while also wanting to attend Meeting for Worship themselves. They hope that more Friends will make time to participate in this part of the Meeting's life. Interested Friends should contact Victoria for more information. We thank her for her report.

6. For Library Committee, Rebecca Smith requested that Adele Bourne be added to that committee. Friends approve.

7. For the Property Committee, Nina Berry reported on the restoration work being done at Saylesville meetinghouse. Heritage Restoration has completed all major exterior work, including replacing damaged clapboards, and will wrap up for the winter in the next week or two. Painting will take place in the spring. We have been fortunate to encounter no really bad surprises. Exterior storm windows have been ordered, and no decision has yet been made about possible changes to the front door, which we would like to make open outwards if feasible. Nina noted that, in the near future, we will need to deal with repairs to the rear chimney, which is not in current use. It is in poor condition but must be retained in order to maintain the historic appearance of the building. We thank the committee for their work.

8. For the Providence Meetinghouse Expansion Committee, Bruce Carlsten sent a report that work is progressing and that we anticipate applying for a certificate of occupancy sometime in Eleventh Month. Drainage lines will be routed around the large maple tree to the east of the new construction. The brick bullnose planned for the bottom of the siding was eliminated in favor of a basement door protected by a retaining wall and a path designed to drain water away from the building. The furnace is expected to be functioning by the end of the week. Considerable work remains to be done on the interior of the new rooms, and the lift has arrived but has not been installed. Friends are invited to suggest methods of covering the window of the old bathroom, now opening to the new multi-purpose room. Friends received the report with thanks, requesting the clerk to keep in touch with both Bruce Carlsten and the Young Adult Friends coordinator regarding next weekend and to thank Bruce for his work.

9. For Program Committee, Nina Berry brought a request for additional funding for a scheduled program. Friends were not clear to add to an existing budget, and Program Committee will consider the options of using their existing budget and/or soliciting contributions from those attending.

10. Item for Reflection: Rebecca Leuchak brought forward a concern for the Meeting's support of our members and attenders, including newcomers, and offered the following queries for consideration:

In what ways do you think the Meeting is or can be helpful in your own or other members' and attenders' personal spiritual deepening?

*How do we or can we support newcomers to our Meeting community?
Are there elements of our Quaker practices that may feel exclusionary to some people?*

It was noted that these questions have arisen repeatedly in State of Society discussions when time pressure makes deep discernment difficult. Specific suggestions from committees or individuals may be helpful for the Meeting for Business to consider. It was noted that individual members could benefit from meeting assistance in discerning ways to follow their individual leadings. We request that Ministry and Counsel bring suggestions for helping the Meeting community to explore the topic of support.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:30 p.m., intending to meet next on the 11th of Eleventh month at the Providence meetinghouse.

Rebecca Leuchak (presiding clerk)
Rebecca Smith (recording clerk)

Below: Long-awaited glimpses of the meetinghouse's new interior. Bruce Carlsten also reports that our new furnace is operational. A certificate of occupancy is expected sometime in November. (Photo courtesy of Rebecca Leuchak)



It's Simple: First Day Schoolers Need Your Help and Wisdom

From the First Day School Committee

First Day School has focused on the testimony "Simplicity" this fall--creatively thinking about ways to manage our time, our clothing, and our stuff so that life has less conflict and that essentials of family, friendship, and our inner light give our lives happiness and meaning.

Please join the good feeling of working with our young folks by giving one Sunday morning to either presenting something meaningful to you OR following a lesson plan provided by First Day School. Your presence as an engaged adult will help our community. Please contact [Victoria Ekk](#) to help out.

Thanks to all who have helped our students this fall. The need is on-going: we will begin planning for Christmas pageant on November 11. Adult help is needed for puppet-making, developing story, and script memorization. Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 15, for the pot-luck and pageant. Children and helpers will need to arrive at 4, and the event will begin at 5 p.m.

We look forward to your help in these endeavors.

PMM Marks World Quaker Day, 2018

On October 7, Providence Friends celebrated World Quaker Day with this year's theme of "Crossing Cultures, Sharing Stories". The First Day School children learned about other cultures and Friends in other countries from Betsy Cazden, who spoke about her recent travels and connections with Quakers in South Africa and France. Before sharing in an international potluck, Friends gathered outside Providence Meetinghouse for our annual photo shoot. And in keeping with this year's theme of "Sharing Stories," all were invited to share one

thing they would like Friends around the world to know about our Meeting. These will be posted on our meeting's website as well as on the site for World Quaker Day. Here's a preview of what we all said:

Providence Friends Meeting is my home!

We have a strong community spirit.

I am glad our meeting is here, where I have met great people, made friends, and become a better person.

Providence Friends Meeting welcomes students, travelers, and a broad range of spiritually and secularly interesting people as a community to reach out to the larger community.

The first day school is awesome!

The Meeting is welcoming to single parents!

We are expanding the Meetinghouse to accommodate our lively first day school.

Love is love. John loves Bill. Bill loves John.

Wonderful people!

Best gathering of every week – anywhere!

We are not sheep. We are God's cats!

We have a lot of different ages.

We are expanding our building to have more room.

We respect everyone's opinions and listen to everyone.

Worship is deep! I love the silence.

We have a very beautiful meetinghouse.

Providence Friends Meeting helps me to be of service to the world.

Love to all Friends wherever you are... from Providence Friends Meeting!

Providence Friends Meeting (“Quakers”) affirms that we celebrate the Light in every person – regardless of origins, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, color, race, religion, ability status, or political affiliation. We affirm the right of each human being to worship, work, live, and love in peace, without fear of violence or persecution. Along with other faith communities that share these values, we stand with those facing discrimination, poverty, violence, stigma, fear, or isolation, and stand ready to offer safety, comfort, encouragement, and love.

We sent our group portrait (below) and an account of our activities to the World Quaker Day web-site, joining Friends from all over the globe with their posted events of celebration in their own meetings. See the official website at <http://www.worldquakerday.org/soa2018/>



Quaker Indian Boarding Schools: Facing Our History and Ourselves

(with thanks to Paula Palmer)

This Sunday, October 21, Providence Friends will host Paula Palmer, a visitor from Boulder Friends Meeting, for an invited talk to begin at noon at the Providence meetinghouse. Following a welcoming potluck lunch, Paula will present a talk on Friends' role in the forced assimilation of Native children, inviting us (and all Friends) to consider, "What does this history and its impact on Native communities mean for Friends today?" Her scholarship in this area was prompted by Native American organizations' request for churches to participate in a process of Truth and Reconciliation, and she has received support from Pendle Hill, Friends Historical Library, the Native American Rights Fund, and others. This important topic resonates with Friends' concerns about confronting and responding to white supremacy and systemic racial injustice. Please bring a

dish to share, invite a friend, and come ready to listen and learn. If you can't make the talk, please visit her website to view her 50-minute slide presentation and access additional resources at: www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/ipc-boarding-school-research.

Paula Palmer's ministry, "Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples," is under the care of Boulder Friends Meeting. Please contact her at PaulaRPalmer@gmail.com.

Show Some Love, Build Something Better: Support Our Neighbors' New Shed Project

from Eugenia Marks

"Love Thy Neighbor" has many different objectives. Ten blocks from our Meetinghouse is the Billy Taylor Park Sharing Garden on the corner of Cypress and Camp Streets. The garden provides fresh produce for residents of the Mount Hope neighborhood.

The garden's pre-fab tool shed blew apart in a ferocious storm in October 2017, and the parent organization of the garden sought a means other than tarpaulins to protect tools, fertilizer, seeds, and record books from the elements. To the rescue came David Bourns, Bob Elliott, Bruce Downing, Steve Schwartz, and Eugenia Marks. With donations to supplement a small budget, the corporate gifts of a door and plywood, a gift from a PFMM member, an employee discount, muscle, ingenuity, and 73 person-hours, the neighborly job was done. However, we're still short about \$300. Would you consider making a contribution to the cause? If so, please contact Eugenia Marks.



FCNL Releases Urgent Appeal for Public Comment on Immigration Policy

Hannah Graf Evans, FCNL Legislative Representative, Immigration & Refugee Policy

The administration recently released a devastating proposal that will adversely impact immigrants seeking residency in the United States. By expanding what it means to be a "public charge," millions of immigrants could be penalized for accessing essential housing, health care, and anti-hunger programs. We do not often ask you to do this, but whenever a new rule is proposed by the federal government, the public has 60 days to comment on the proposed change. Your comments should be brief and personal. They should clearly state that you oppose this proposed regulation and want it to be withdrawn. If you want to know more and get tips on how to comment, click [here](#). Our system will automatically post your comments to the government's comment site. It's as simple as that.

We can stop this.

The clock is ticking. We have to tell the government not to turn our immigration system into a pay-to-play process, where only wealthy people can gain residency in the U.S.

P.S. FCNL is joining with the Protecting Immigrant Families coalition to get 100,000 public comments against this rule. Help us spread the word. Invite your friends to take action.

Clerk's Corner

from Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk

I am a lover of languages. I teach communication skills to international graduate students, and knowing other languages is a very important part of my identity. I often tell my students, in urging them to build vocabulary, that when I meet a new word for the first time it is like Christmas morning: I have received a gift to be enjoyed, used, and cherished.

Often in meeting for worship I center on a word – "grace" or "revelation" or "community" or even the "dazzling" French word *ébloui* (a particular favorite of mine). The exploration of a word that comes to me in the silence is often

revelatory—the layers of meaning, the poetry of the usage. But it is also apparent to me that words are but pale attempts to fix the complex concepts that are deeply rooted in our awareness. This is particularly apparent in religious language, where we seek to describe an ineffable essence. That challenge—to describe the indescribable—has been with us since we first painted on cave walls thirty thousand years ago. The ocean of writing and art that has spread out from those first attempts maps the millennia of ongoing struggle for mortals to get some kind of hold on what is immortal.

As Quakers, our tradition of individual seeking for Truth across languages, cultures and faith traditions is a particular strength. Our history is rooted in the texts and profound truths of Christian scripture, but also in the epistolary tidings of early Quaker thinkers and writers. We once defied tradition in our pronoun usage to remind ourselves and others of our equal humanity. Even today, there are distinctive Quakerly ways of speaking that are set apart from everyday parlance. And while the frame of reference for the founding of the Quaker movement was specifically Christian, today we hold that the divine can be found in all manner of traditions and expressions. This openness in seeking is a gift I wish to raise up. Our journey into deeper spiritual revelation is our own, unique and self-driven. Each of us is engaged in a creative and tender exploration. Each of us finds Truth in a variety of places. And we are truly blessed to have a home in our Quaker community, where all attempts to express the ineffable are welcome.

Sometimes our expressions may be easy and lucid; sometimes (perhaps more often) they may be clumsy and fumbling and difficult. Whatever the particular words we choose, the point is that we try to share them with each other—and in doing so, to share the paths we are on and the views we encounter along the way. The words we use are not always the same, but the core of what we discover is what truly unites us. After all, we are on this journey together!

And, dear Friends, if you have a favorite word to share, please free to introduce me—I will be most grateful!

Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** clerk@providencefriends.org
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Recording Clerk: **Rebecca Smith** recordingclerk@providencefriends.org
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Program Committee: **Nina Berry** program@providencefriends.org
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Newsletter: **Jen McFadden** providentfriend@providencefriends.org
Email List Moderator: **Dan Lederer** list@providencefriends.org
Website: **Sam Schifman** webclerk@providencefriends.org
Moses Brown School Liaison: **Betsy Zimmerman** liaison@providencefriends.org
To schedule the Meetinghouse: **Bruce Shaw** scheduling@providencefriends.org
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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

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99 Morris Avenue
Providence, RI 02906