

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship  
with a Concern for Business  
10th of Third Month, 2019  
Minutes**

Friends gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at noon, with 16 present. Presiding clerk Rebecca Leuchak began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from New England Yearly Meeting Interim Faith and Practice (1985) <https://neym.org/faith-practice/part-3/queries> :

On Peace and Reconciliation

Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars"?

Do you strive to increase understanding and use of nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts?

Do you take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations?

**Announcements**

- Our monthly fellowship with Muslim neighbors will take place on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. outside the mosque at 39 Haskins St., Providence. Details are available from Wendy Virgadamo or Bob Watt.
- Meeting for business of the Southeast Quarter, in which we are included, will take place at Westerly meetinghouse on March 17, following meeting for worship at 10:30 and a pot-luck lunch and a program. All are welcome and childcare will be provided. Carpooling is encouraged. Contact Rebecca Leuchak for more information.
- A free Family Game Night will be held on March 29 at 5:00 p.m. at the Providence meetinghouse. See John Lord for details.
- A youth-led Celebration of the new wing will be held after the rise of meeting for worship on March 31.
- Ministry and Counsel Committee requests that we respect Friends' time by keeping post-meeting announcements brief, including simply what is happening, when, and whom to contact for more information. Announcements of events not directly involving our Meeting should be shared on the social e-mail list or the bulletin board downstairs rather than at the rise of meeting.

## CALENDAR

**Friday, March 15, 1:30 pm**

Fellowship with Muslim Neighbors  
Masjid Al Kareem, 39 Haskins St.,  
Providence

**Saturday, March 16**

Bookswap, Saylesville Meetinghouse

**Sunday, March 17**

**11:45 am**, Introduction to Quakerism,  
Providence Meetinghouse Library

**Sunday, March 17**

Southeast Quarterly Meeting at  
Westerly Monthly Meeting. Meeting for  
Worship there starts at 10:30 am.

**Friday, March 29, 5:00 pm**, Family

Game Night, Providence Meetinghouse

**Sunday, March 31, 11:30 am**

Celebration of New Wing

**Saturday, April 6, 8:45 am to**

**4:00 pm**, NEYM Living Faith  
Gathering, Friends Academy, North  
Dartmouth, MA

**Sunday, April 7, 11:15 am**

PMM Monthly Potluck, Providence  
Meetinghouse

**Sunday, April 14, 12 pm**

PMM Meeting for Business,  
Providence Meetinghouse

**Wednesdays (Weekly)**

**12 pm**, Mid-week Meeting for Worship  
Brown University Chaplain's Suite  
Page-Robinson Hall, 69 Brown Street  
Room 409

**Building Expansion Committee Report.** Bruce Carlsten reported that we finally have a Certificate of Occupancy and have begun using the new space. There will be an opening celebration later this month. For the time being, to be cautious, we ask that the lift only be used when someone can check from the outside on both floors to be sure it

March 15, 2019

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

is working properly. We note that use of the lift is intended only for those who require it for health or safety reasons. We hope to schedule an orientation so that Friends will become familiar with its function and the guidelines for its use. Providence Meetinghouse Management and Property Committees will take care of this. We thank Bruce and his committee for a great deal of work.

**Ministry and Counsel Report .** Bruce Shaw reminded us that the first draft of the State of Society report will be brought to next month's meeting for business. He also reported that a proposal had been brought that the Meeting acknowledge the indigenous peoples who preceded us by using the following statement, either by posting it in our meetinghouse or by reading it at the beginnings of meetings for business:

“We would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of the Narragansett and Wampanoag Indian nations.”

After some discussion, Friends were in unity to display a plaque with such a statement but not to prescribe words for meetings, both because Friends traditionally avoid ritual forms and because it could be seen as an empty gesture. Friends also expressed interest in action, including meeting with and learning more about the local Native Americans.

**Membership Recorder's report.** Elsie Morse brought copies of the statistical report which will be sent to NEYM. We have a total of 234 members (the same as last year); this includes 42 non-resident members. Average attendance at meeting for worship is 61 in Providence, 9 in Saylesville, 12.5 at Conanicut, and 1.5 at Brown; average at meeting for business is 19. We thank the Membership Recorders for their work.

**Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer Peter Swaszek brought the report for the third quarter of the fiscal year. The Meeting's finances are “in the black.” The addition expenses are within budget. He noted, however, that the telephone rate has increased and that expenses for the Providence telephone line are already over 100% of the amount budgeted for the year. He asked for authority to overspend that line by up to \$300 (up to \$2,000 total.) Friends approved.

**Finance Committee Report.** Dan Lederer brought a preliminary budget proposal for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. It included two sets of possible figures for next year, one including support for the Saylesville meetinghouse and one without. He noted that the expanded Providence meetinghouse will require some increased funds to keep up, and that the estimated contributions and income from savings probably cannot be increased. The proposed budgets include reductions in contributions to outside organizations and in the amounts to be added to the meetinghouse maintenance funds. In the proposed budget, Finance Committee requests that the line for contributions to NEYM specify that our Meeting's contributions to NEYM not be used to support FUM. This would be a change from our current practice of leaving such discernment up to individual members of our Meeting. Regarding the difference between budgets with and without Saylesville, Dan noted that approximately half of the Saylesville meetinghouse expenses, notably lawn care and water/ sewer charges, would still need to be paid. Our budget for the coming year is due to be approved at the April meeting for business.

**Peace and Social Action Committee Proposal.** Eugenia Marks brought a proposal that our Meeting endorse the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty and request membership in that organization. Eugenia provided information about their priorities and noted that our membership would not require either a financial contribution or a commitment to any particular activity. Friends approved.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 2:00 p.m., intending to meet next on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Fourth month at noon at the Providence meetinghouse.

Rebecca Leuchak, presiding clerk  
Rebecca Smith, recording clerk

## **Guidelines for Announcements from Ministry and Counsel**

We are trying to be respectful of Friends' time and by keeping the announcement period brief after Meeting for Worship. If you have an announcement in the life of the Meeting, please write it legibly as you would like it to be read from the facing bench and leave it on the facing bench before Meeting. Announcements should include the title of the activity first, followed by date, time, place, and the name of the person to contact for more information. Announcements of community activities of interest that are not activities of our Meeting should be submitted to the listserve, please, not announced at the rise of Meeting. Also, during introductions Friends are invited to share a brief personal joy or sorrow, but introductions are not an extension of the announcement period. If you have questions about the announcement policy, please see Bruce Shaw, clerk of Ministry and Counsel.

## **Quarterly Meeting March 17 at Westerly**

Friends of Southeast Quarterly Meeting, which includes Providence Monthly Meeting, Conanicut Friends Meeting-Indulged, Smithfield Monthly Meeting, Westerly Monthly Meeting, and Worcester Friends Meeting, are warmly welcome and encouraged to attend our Quarterly Meeting for Business, which will be held next week, March 17, at Westerly Meeting. Worship there begins at 10:30 a.m. and is followed by a potluck lunch, special program, and meeting for business. Childcare will be provided. Carpooling is encouraged. Come and enjoy the fellowship of Friends from across the Quarter, learn new things in the scheduled program, and participate in the work of the Quarterly Meeting's business. Contact Rebecca Leuchak if you want to carpool. She and Bob Watt will be leaving the Providence Meetinghouse at 9:30 a.m. on that Sunday to drive down to Westerly. They have room for a couple more Friends to come along! Westerly Friends Meeting is at 57 Elm Street in Westerly. Meetinghouse phone is 401-348-7078.

Reminder: Mark your calendars for

### **Family Game Night**

Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

Everyone – young and old – is invited to join us for  
pizza, soda, juice and an evening of  
unplugged game playing.

## **NEYM Living Faith Gathering, April 6 at New Bedford, MA**

Whether you've been to every Living Faith Gathering or it's your first chance to attend, all are warmly welcomed to this lovely one-day event held each spring and fall. The upcoming Living Faith will be on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at Friends Academy, just outside of New Bedford, MA. This is a chance for Friends new and old – and from across New England and beyond - to get to know one another, worship together, share the different ways we experience and live our faith, and build community. Living Faith registration is open and you can register by going to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/living-faith-gathering-april-6-2019-registration-5523924005>  
4. Please come if you can - your presence will enrich us all!

## **Announcing A New Email List: Providence Friends Social Group** from Communications Committee

Some recipients of the Meeting Email List (“listserv”) have expressed concern about the number of messages they receive and the personal nature of some of them. In response, Communications Committee is trying a new approach. We are asking Friends to limit what they send out to the Meeting Email List to announcements of events in the life of the Meeting or outside events of particular interest to Friends, and we continue to ask that replies be directed to the sender and not to the entire group.

But what about other types of messages? In order to accommodate those of us who would like to communicate with the Meeting community on other topics as well, we have created a Providence Friends Social Group. This is where we welcome virtually any kind of notices or commentaries, provided of course that they are in good taste and are respectful of other members of the group and of our wider community. On it you can advertise events that you’re involved in, request help with an activity, comment on any kind of issue, etc. It will work the same as our current Email List, which is to say that, as a member of the group, you will receive messages and will be able to post them to the group by directing them, in this case, to [providence-friends-social@googlegroups.com](mailto:providence-friends-social@googlegroups.com). In contrast to our current Email List, you can feel free to share your responses with the group.

No one is put on this list automatically, so if you would like to be included in the new Providence Friends Social Group you need to contact committee clerk Dan Lederer ([dlederer1@verizon.net](mailto:dlederer1@verizon.net)). We’re hoping you’ll give it a try (if it turns out that you don’t like it, you can always opt out). We’re looking forward to some lively conversations without disturbing those among us who want to keep their email messages to a minimum.

Even if you choose not to be part of the new email group, it’s still important for Friends who want to engage fully with Meeting to be on the (old) Meeting Email List and to be listed in the Meeting Directory. If this is not happening for you, please contact Dan.

## **Monthly Information Sessions on Quakerism, Third Sundays, 11:45 AM**

Information sessions will be offered for newcomers or others interested in learning a bit more about the Society of Friends. These sessions, consisting of a very brief presentation followed by discussion, are planned to take place on the third Sunday of each month at the Providence meetinghouse, starting about 11:45 AM and lasting no more than an hour. It is not necessary to register in advance or to commit to more than one session. The first session will take place on March 17. For more information, contact Rebecca Smith ([acelinebarrett@aol.com](mailto:acelinebarrett@aol.com)), Betsy Cazden, or Rebecca Leuchak.

## **Library Resources on Quaker Basics**

The Providence Meeting library has a shelf of books intended to be helpful to those interested in getting to know more about Quakerism. They are located at the left-hand end of the top shelf and may be borrowed. (Fill out the borrowing card at the back of the book and leave it in the basket.) Also on that shelf are several copies of a DVD of QuakerSpeak videos entitled “What Do Quakers Believe?” These may also be borrowed. QuakerSpeak videos are also online at <http://quakerspeak.com/>.

## **New in the Library** from Betsy Cazden

**NEW IN THE LIBRARY:** Richard C. Allen and Rosemary Moore, *The Quakers, 1656-1723: The Evolution of an Alternative Community*. Penn State Univ. Press, 2018.

As its title indicates, this book is an overview of what is often called the “second period” of Quaker development. The excitement and ferment of the initial Quaker movement did not last – it rarely does – and over time matured into an organized Religious Society of Friends.

This book is intended to complement the classic volumes, William C. Braithwaite’s *The Second Period of Quakerism* (1919, reprinted 1961) and Rufus M. Jones’ *Quakerism in the American Colonies* (1909). The older

books reflected a focus on London and Philadelphia, and the strong bias of their authors. Since then, many scholars have looked at Quaker communities in diverse settings, from Barbados to rural Wales to New England to the European continent, showing how this diversity of experience shaped and reshaped Quakers' understanding of their faith and the demands of their practice. Women's studies has brought new perspectives, as has attention to the lived experience of indigenous people and enslaved and free Africans in or near Quaker communities. It has seemed time for new comprehensive treatment of the sweep of Quaker history.

This book is designed to be readable by non-scholars, although it has footnotes and bibliography for those who want them. It is organized thematically. The two main authors, both in the UK, are experts in the field. They have invited other scholars to write particular chapters, which include how Quakers fit into the religious landscape of dissenting sects, Quakers and law and politics, and the lived experience of women Friends on both sides of the Atlantic. The chapter on Quakers and business analyzes Quaker merchants and early industrial firms, particularly English coal and iron works. Richard Allen's chapter on Quakers in the Americas includes a good description of the 1672 debates between Roger Williams and George Fox and the ministers traveling with him. The final chapter, "Into the Eighteenth Century," by Canadian scholar Robynne Rogers Healey, bridges from this book into the next volume in this series, which will cover the "long" eighteenth century (roughly 1689 to the Hicksite separation in 1827-8). With Healey as the editor, it is set for publication by Penn State in 2020.

## **Consider Giving Your IRA Annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to Save Money**

from Zona Douthit

If you want to reduce your current income taxes or Rhode Island estate taxes, consider a gift from your IRA to Providence Monthly Meeting (PPM).

*Outright Gift:* Rhode Island currently taxes estates of individuals above \$1.5 million, which includes life insurance proceeds. If you want to reduce your Rhode Island Estate tax and benefit a charity at your death, designating the charity as a beneficiary of an IRA results in a larger gift because the charity will not owe income tax on the withdrawal. There are some requirements about timing of the distribution if you also leave part of the account to an individual, so it is important to consult with a knowledgeable adviser before designating any charity as your beneficiary. If you want to name your spouse as the primary beneficiary, consider naming PMM as a contingent beneficiary.

*Required Minimum Distributions:* If you don't really need the money you are required to withdraw from an IRA after age 70 ½ and you make regular contributions to PMM, you tell your IRA plan custodian that you want the RMD to go directly to PMM. The savings comes because you never have to claim it on your income tax, thus reducing your adjusted gross income (AGI Line 37 on the 1040). Why does that matter? All sorts of income taxes and deductions are based on AGI. For example, a larger AGI might increase the 3.8% Net Investment Income Tax, income tax on Social Security benefits, and federal and state income taxes. At the same time, AGI affects Medicare premiums and the deductibility of certain expenses, such as medical expenses. If you no longer itemize because the standard deduction is now \$12,000 per filer, donating directly from an IRA has the effect of making the charitable donation essentially deductible. Giving RMDs directly to PMM might be cumbersome for small donations, and you must be sure to do it correctly. Again, consult with a knowledgeable adviser.

Donating all or part of an RMD to PMM can be especially useful once you are over age 90 because you are required to withdraw a large percentage of your IRA by then. Best of all, if you need the money in the future, you can always revert to giving RMDs to yourself and still designate a different beneficiary for the ultimate distribution.

## **Message from Seth Kolker, Beijing, China**

Greetings from Beijing! I'm writing with two exciting updates:

(1) Stanford offered me the scholarship I had been hoping for, so I'm incredibly excited, humbled, and still in denial that I'm headed off to California for three years! The plan is to graduate in 2022 without debt but with a joint masters in education policy and JD in law; it's wonderful that my girlfriend Sarah is out in Palo Alto as well. I'm feeling incredibly grateful to the very, very long list of people who have supported me up to this point - that list very much includes this community that grounded me during my formative three years of teaching in Central Falls - and hope to put this blessing to good use.

(2) My former students in Central Falls are at it again, and any support you can offer would be greatly appreciated and put to excellent use! They're again studying how to change the world, and again going to DC for a week with a whole new roster of exciting site visits planned. Donations can be sent via check made out to "CFHS / ELO on How to Change the World" to How to Change the World, c/o Lesdin Salazar, 24 Summer St., Central Falls, RI 02863. Of course, please feel free to share the fundraising link with your networks. I also send greetings from the Palo Alto Meeting, where I was able to attend during my final interview at Stanford, and hope to see you when I visit RI and when any of you pass through the area in the next three years!

## **Clerk's Corner: A Heart Full of Love**

from Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk

I am thinking, Friends, of what it would be like to have a heart that is truly FULL of love - so full that there could be no room left in it for anger or hate. What a wondrous thing this would be--and how not true of my own heart!

When I stop to count the people and things I love, the list is a long one: my husband and children, my extended family, my friends near and far, my beloved meeting community. There is the love I feel for the natural world, and the love I feel for creative forms through which we humans communicate our most essential and powerful messages. There is my love for the power of humans working together in collaboration at every level, from the interpersonal to the international, and my love for the work we do together. There is love for so much in this heart of mine!

But even so, I am aware that it is not yet full. There remains a little bit of space where darkness lives, a space occupied not by love but by anger and hate. These inhabitants of my heart serve no good purpose--they are unhealthy in both the spiritual and physical sense; they limit my growth.

Growth seems a fitting metaphor at this time of year, as we enter the season of snow and mud and cold and warming and rain and sun. Gardener that I am, my thoughts turn to the seeds that lie waiting in the ground. I am reminded of those fascinating time-lapse videos of seeds sprouting, unfurling and miraculously reaching skyward. The seed itself is the nourishment that is consumed by the plant, as pulsing with energy it sends its roots downward and its stem and leaves stretching upward. How similar this is to the expression of one's own self through the nurture of a heart full of love! We are each in process of unfurling and reaching, growing into a beautiful being, with an energy that is fed by love. Hatred and anger only arrest and stunt that development.

The promise of spring seems to offer a challenge: that we tend to the parts of ourselves not fully given over to love, and that we find a way to turn negative to positive, darkness to light - to turn from anger and hatred toward compassion and understanding. As winter draws to an end, I look forward to the actual and metaphoric gardening soon to come: to prepare the soil, plant, weed, and harvest the fruits that come from the well-tended seed.

## Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

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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** - 10-11:30 am 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wed's - Saylesville

**Wednesday** - Noon-12:45 pm Brown University in  
Page-Robinson Hall, Room 409

**Potluck, Providence** - each First Sunday

**Meeting for Business**

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

**The Provident FRIEND**

Newsletter of

Providence Monthly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends

99 Morris Avenue

Providence, RI 02906