

The Provident FRIEND

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

October 20, 2019

Providence Friends Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 13th of Tenth Month, 2019 – Minutes

Friends gathered at the Saylesville meetinghouse at noon, with 20 present. Presiding clerk Rebecca Leuchak began the period of silent worship by reading the following taken from *New England Yearly Meeting Interim Faith and Practice*, 2015 edition.

Queries 13, 14, and 15, p. 112.

https://neym.org/sites/default/files/Interim_F%26P_2015_web%20edition.pdf

Do you use your time, energy, resources, gifts, and material possessions in the service of God's love?

Are you ready to respond to any concern God may lay upon you, large or small?

Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation? Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you?

Announcements.

Our Children, Our World: Learning and the future of humanity - a public conversation, including two of the country's foremost leaders on the future of learning. Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall, Founding President, Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and Dr. Veronica Boix Mansilla, Principal Investigator, Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education, at Moses Brown School on Thursday, October 17, 2019 from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM in the Woodman Performing Arts Center at Moses Brown School.

The Saylesville meetinghouse will be open from 10:00 to 4:00 on Saturday, 19 October. We are taking the opportunity of a Revolutionary War-era event at Hearthsides House to invite the public to our own historic building. We will provide historical information about the building and about the lives of Friends in the area in the late 18th century.

The next morning, October 20, at 8:00 a.m. we will have an early-morning meeting for worship at Saylesville, to which the public will be invited. Members of our Meeting will occupy the facing benches and men and women will sit separately, as was done in the 1700s. Additional volunteers and visitors are welcome for both days. For more information, contact Rebecca Smith (acelinebarrett@aol.com) or any member of the Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee.

CALENDAR

Friday, October 18 to Sunday, October 20, NEYM Young Adult Friends,
Providence Meetinghouse

Saturday, October 19, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Saylesville Meetinghouse open to the public

Sunday, October 20, 11:45 AM, Presentation by Kia Salem on Green Energy
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, October 20, 1:00 PM, Southeast Quarterly Meeting,
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, October 27, 11:45 AM, Carole Rein talking on Palestine,
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, October 27, 11:45 AM, Introduction to Quakerism Library,
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, November 3, 11:25 AM Potluck Lunch,
Providence Meetinghouse

Saturday, November 9, 7:00 PM, Film "An Endless War? Getting Out of Afghanistan"
Providence Meetinghouse

Sunday, November 10, Noon, Meeting for Business,
Providence Meetinghouse

Also on Sunday, October 20th, the Peace and Social Action Committee is hosting a presentation by Kai Salem, Policy Coordinator at the Green Energy Consumers' Alliance, who will talk about how to be an informed energy consumer. Her talk will take place during coffee hour.

And that same Sunday, Southeast Quarterly Meeting will be held at the Providence meetinghouse on Sunday October 20 after a workshop on climate issues brought to us by the Peace and Social Action Committee. Come and meet Friends from around our Quarterly Meeting and discern the business of our Quarter. See Rebecca Leuchak for more information.

A NEYM Young Friends retreat will take place at the Providence meetinghouse on October 18-20.

The next installment of our monthly information sessions for newcomers and others interested in learning more about the Society of Friends will take place on October 27 at 11:45 AM in the Providence meetinghouse library. See Rebecca Smith for more details.

Eighteen years after 9/11, our own Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Team presents *An Endless War? Getting OUT of Afghanistan*, a documentary film supported by FCNL national office, Saturday, November 9, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at Providence meetinghouse. Dessert provided. See Nancy Houston or Eugenia Marks for more information or see www.fcnl.org/endlesswar.

For Ministry and Counsel, Jennifer McFadden brought a request for transfer of membership. Martha Yager, a member of Weare Monthly Meeting in New Hampshire, has been living in our area for some years and wishes to transfer her membership to Providence. We have received a certificate from Weare MM releasing her to our care. Friends approved.

Jen also reported that a request to use the Providence meetinghouse for a Bat Mitzvah ceremony was forwarded by the Providence Meetinghouse Scheduler to Ministry and Counsel, which in turn asked for the discernment of the Meeting. After discussion, it appeared that building use requests should be handled initially by the Meetinghouse Management Committee. However, it also appears that the Meeting does not have a clear policy about the potential use of our property for rituals of other faith traditions. We ask the Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee to consider this matter further and report to a future meeting for business.

For Property Committee, Nina Berry brought a report following on last month's meeting. Property Committee is in need of additional funding for the remainder of the fiscal year, due to the higher-than-anticipated cost of the parking area work. Having consulted with the Treasurer and the clerk of Finance Committee, Nina requested that we transfer an additional \$20,000 from the General Fund to the Providence Meetinghouse Maintenance Fund. Friends approve with thanks to the Property Committee for their good stewardship.

For the Religious Education Committee, Victoria Ekk reported on the Committee's activities. There are three First Day School groups meeting this year, including a middle school group which meets twice a month. There are about 14 children who attend most weeks and another six who come about half the time. The theme for the year is environmental stewardship and sustainability, and these are matters of stress as well as possibility for the children. Today they planted a sugar maple tree near our new parking area. The committee has ten active members, but there is still need for additional volunteers to help with classes. We thank the committee for their important work.

For the Library Committee, Rebecca Smith reported that the Committee is preparing to dispose of many of the books formerly housed at Saylesville. A list will be circulated to the Meeting soon. More immediately, the Committee proposes to donate to the Dexter Parsonage Museum, former home of Martin Luther King, Jr., some books which are suitable to the period but no longer in use here. Betsy Cazden reported on her recent visit to that parsonage and read the list of proposed donations. Friends approved.

For Hospitality Committee, Eugenia Marks reported that the Committee continues to stock the Providence meetinghouse with coffee and other items and to recruit volunteers to set up coffee hour. The committee has cleaned the kitchen and cleaned out the refrigerator. People bringing food for special events are asked to take home their left-overs so that old food does not accumulate. The committee will soon be organizing the pot-luck meal for the Christmas gathering. The Treasurer reminded us that there is a budget from which people can be reimbursed for expenses involved in setting up coffee hour. We thank the Hospitality committee for facilitating our time together.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:45 p.m., intending to meet next on the tenth of Eleventh month at noon at the Providence meetinghouse.

Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk
Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

**Our Children, Our World: Learning and the Future of Humanity,
Thursday October 17**

This will be a public conversation with two of the country's foremost leaders on the future of learning: Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall, Founding President, Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and Dr. Veronica Boix Mansilla, Principal Investigator, Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education, at Moses Brown School on Thursday, October 17, 2019, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM in the Woodman Performing Arts Center.

**NEYM Young Adult Friends Retreat,
Friday October 18 - Sunday October 20**

Providence Friends Meeting will be hosting an NEYM Young Adult Friends weekend retreat from Friday, October 18 to Sunday, October 20. 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.

Open House at Saylesville on Saturday October 19

The Saylesville meetinghouse will be open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday October 19. We are taking the opportunity of a Revolutionary War-era event at Hearthside House to invite the public to our own historic building. We will provide historical information about the building and about the lives of Friends in the area in the late 18th century. The next morning, October 20 at 8:00 AM, we will have an early-morning meeting for worship at Saylesville to which the public will be invited. Members of our Meeting will occupy the facing benches and men and women will sit separately, as was done in the 1700s. Additional volunteers and visitors are welcome for both days. For more information, contact Rebecca Smith (acelinebarrett@aol.com) or any member of the Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee.

Green Energy Talk on Sunday October 20

On Sunday October 20, the Peace and Social Action Committee is hosting a presentation by Kai Salem, Policy Coordinator at the Green Energy Consumers' Alliance, who will talk about how to be an informed energy consumer. Her talk will take place during coffee hour.

Southeast Quarterly Meeting, Sunday October 20

And after the presentation by Kai Salem, Southeast Quarterly Meeting will be held at the Providence meetinghouse. That's Sunday October 20 starting at 1:00 p.m. Come and meet Friends from around our Quarterly Meeting and discern the business of our Quarter. See the Quarterly Meeting agenda on the bulletin board downstairs, and Rebecca Leuchak for more information.

**Introduction to Quakerism,
Sunday October 27**

An information session for newcomers or others interested in learning a bit more about the Society of Friends is offered each month at the Providence meetinghouse, starting about 11:45 in the library. The program consists of a very brief presentation followed by discussion, and lasts no more than an hour. It is not necessary to register in advance or to commit to more than one session.

Documentary About Ending the War in Afghanistan from FCNL, Saturday November 9

The Providence based FCNL (Friend's Committee on National Legislation) Advocacy Team, one of 109 teams in 40 states across the U.S., will presenting a **free screening of the documentary film, An Endless War: Getting OUT of Afghanistan, Saturday evening, November 9 at 7 p.m.** at the Providence Friends Meetinghouse. Come learn about America's longest and ongoing war. Find out what our local Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Team is doing to stop this endless war, to prevent future ones, and to learn how you can help. As a documentary about war, the film has some graphic scenes and disturbing content not appropriate for children.

Sojourning in Prophetic Skin *from Sam Schifman*

I am sitting in a small classroom at Grinnell College, in Iowa. The walls are dedicated to graduate art programs around the country, but this week the tables and desks have been pushed aside to allow a small circle of Friends to gather and discuss. The gathering is a workshop on Being a Modern Prophet, led by Gail Thomas, part of FGC's 2019 Gathering of Friends, a week-long time of fellowship, music, and discussion amongst generally like-minded Friends.

In the end, I picked Bruce Lee to present to the gathered group, even though it was a little odd to hold up, in a Quaker gathering, someone who made his bones making martial arts movies. Perhaps it would be useful to step back and talk about what is a "prophet." This was something that the group had tried to define on the first day but never did get to a precise definition. However, I am not speaking here for the group, I am speaking about my own experience. So I will pull out a few things that stood out for me.

- A prophet is not a saint. As we look at the Old Testament and even beyond, it is seldom that prophets are measured by their sanctity or moral fortitude.
- A prophet is a mirror, someone who sees, or is shown by God, some truth about the world and society. Often this truth is a flaw and the prophet is trying to warn us about it.

Bruce Lee was definitely not a saint. However, he did have some powerful insights into the world and society, being an Asian looking for acceptance in Hollywood and in Hong Kong. He has also had a profound impact on bringing the world together, maybe not through oration like Martin Luther King Jr., but perhaps through action.

One of the other attenders of the workshop, who hailed from Africa, shared that Bruce Lee was

his first introduction to movies. Apparently, once a year a movie projector was brought to his village and it always played the same Bruce Lee film, *Enter the Dragon*. However skewed the perception was, Bruce Lee served as many people's introduction to a larger world, be that East or West.

But justifying why I chose Bruce Lee is not my point here. There may well have been a little bit of mischievousness involved, and I am not at all sure he was the best choice. My point is that the workshop broadened my definition of being a prophet quite a bit.

I have come to see that anyone who is called to tell a story is in some way a prophet. The trick is to find the true prophet, or the light, in any message. For this, I believe we require love. But that is an opening to another discussion, which perhaps I will have time to share in some coming month.

For now, please feel free to check out my short story that was inspired by the week:
<https://thoughts.oakbear.net/2019/07/writing-web-of-future-winds-calling.html>

The Time of Gleaning

from Rebecca Leuchak

With golden fall days and a nor'easter passing through, I am planning the late harvest of my gardens. From early spring until now they reflect the shifts of seasons. The abundance of strawberries, rhubarb and greens early in the growing season, the avalanche of peas followed by beans in mid-summer, then tomatoes...tomatoes...and more tomatoes, and now the time of late crops.

At present, I am watching the brussels sprouts and cauliflower just beginning to be ready for picking. They have been developing slowly all summer long. A lesson in persistence! And I have the assurance that the cabbages, winter squash, red beets, turnips, and carrots are safe and snug right where they are in the dirt. I can pluck them up when I need them and, as it gets colder, they will only grow sweeter! Soon is the time to plant my garlic, which will be harvested next June. Then there's the horseradish root that needs digging in November. I should be still harvesting kale in December if all goes well.

The layering of these growing things is what fascinates me. What I love is the gathered knowledge of all these different stages, their high points and their dying away, the planting and replanting, the early and the late gardens, and the knowledge of just how long the growing period is for a vegetable garden. It is quite long, in fact.

So too the growing season for each of us is never ending. We sow and reap and re-sow and reap and the harvest is a life-long, never-ending marvel. I feel keenly as an individual that the Quaker faith in on-going revelation is strong. New fruits take time and are ready at all different stages of life. But I also feel that sense of the garden in our Meeting community. We sowed some major seeds this past year in our Meeting, seeds of change: building expansion, parking and landscaping project, more peace and social justice programming, invigorated first day school programs, active committee work, new presiding clerk and other committee clerks, closer connections with our Southeast Quarterly Meeting, with New England Yearly Meeting, with FCNL, and with our neighbor, Moses Brown School. These all bear fruit in their right season. We are so fortunate to have such abundance!

As any farmer knows, success of a garden is measured by the productivity of the crops. And productivity is fundamentally a question of rich soil. Looking at our Meeting, reflecting on all that we are doing, I would say that our soil is quite rich indeed. It is the rich soil of faith that nourishes these efforts. We are a garden with much in cultivation. Our harvest is ongoing and layered.

Today our First Day School folks planted a sugar maple in our backyard. What seeds are you planting? What crops are you tending? Are they quick to harvest or slow to grow? Let's share our knowledge and our talents. Together we can create the most beautiful of gardens!

Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

Presiding Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** clerk@providencesfriends.org
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden** providentfriend@providencesfriends.org
Website: **Sam Schiffman** webclerk@providencesfriends.org
General Inquiries: info@providencesfriends.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
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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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Providence, RI 02906