

The Provident FRIEND

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

December 12, 2019

Attention All Readers

from The Editors

In the interest of cost savings, we at The Provident Friend are gradually phasing out the print version of our newsletter. Although we would prefer that readers receive the electronic version by email, we want to continue mailing a print version to those of you for whom the email version isn't feasible.

Attached to this issue of the newsletter is a stamped, self-addressed postcard for you to indicate whether you are willing to receive the electronic version, in which case we need your email address, or whether you would prefer to continue to receive the print version. We're hoping you choose one or the other, but if we don't hear from you we'll take that to mean that you don't want either, and we'll then discontinue your subscription. So please detach the postcard, indicate your choice on the back, and drop it in the mailbox soon. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

CALENDAR

Saturday, Dec 14, 5:00 PM,
Christmas Gathering, Providence
Meetinghouse

Sunday, Dec 15, 11:45 AM,
Session for Newcomers, Providence
Meetinghouse Library

Friday, Dec 20, 1:30 PM, Fellowship
with Muslim Neighbors, Masjid Al
Kareem, 39 Haskins St., Providence

Tuesday, Dec 24, 4:30 PM,
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service,
Saylesville Meetinghouse

Sunday, Jan 5, 11:30 AM,
Potluck Lunch, Providence
Meetinghouse

Sunday, Jan 12, noon,
Meeting for Business,
Providence Meetinghouse

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 8th of Twelfth Month, 2019 Minutes

Friends gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at noon, with 15 present. Assistant presiding clerk Dan Lederer began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from Philadelphia Year Meeting Faith and Practice (2018):

How does our meeting communicate Friends' presence and principles to the wider community?

How does our meeting join with other faith communities in worship, in spiritual dialogue and in social action?

Announcements.

Our annual Christmas Gathering is just one week away. Please join us at our annual Christmas Gathering – a celebration in song and story - on Saturday, December 14, from 5:00 until 7:00 PM. All are welcome – friends, family, attenders, neighbors. The Gathering features singing, sharing, fellowship, and a potluck. Instrumentalists are encouraged to join the Sounds of Silence orchestra. Just show up with

something more or less in tune.

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 Sunday December 15 at 11:45 AM in the Providence meetinghouse library. See Rebecca Smith for more details.

January's first First Day will be our annual Committee Fair! Come and bring festive foods for our first potluck lunch of the New Year and learn more about the work of our busy committees that are so essential to helping our Friends' community thrive! Children's activities are a special feature of this event!

Peace and Social Action Committee. In Third month 2019, Friends approved the possibility of displaying a plaque in the meetinghouse acknowledging the indigenous peoples who preceded us. On behalf of the committee, Steve Schwartz proposed the following wording: "Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends acknowledges that this land, which our community now uses and on which our meetinghouse sits, is the traditional homeland of the Narragansett and Wampanoag Nations."

In discussion, it appeared that we are not in unity about the use of a plaque: some Friends considered the idea to be an empty example of political correctness, and others regarded it as a valuable reminder of history and invitation to understanding. We return the matter to Peace and Social Action for further discernment.

For the same committee, Steve also brought a proposal that the Meeting endorse a proposed ordinance drafted by the City of Providence Office of Sustainability. This ordinance would require the owners of large buildings to gather and report information on energy usage in order to encourage efficient use of energy and to enable more effective energy and climate protection planning. Peace and Social Action Committee recommends to Meeting for Business that our community send a letter of endorsement of the upcoming ordinance relating to energy use to our City Councilpersons and the Council president. Our statement would read "Providence Friends Meeting, acting under concern for climate change, is expressing our support for the passage of the proposed ordinance: Sec. 2-145, Building Energy Reporting Program." Friends approved. We also ask Property Committee to consider an energy audit of our buildings.

Meeting Treasurer, Peter Swaszek reported on the Meeting's finances halfway through the fiscal year. Member contributions received so far amount to about one -third of the amount budgeted for the year. We thank Peter for his report.

Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee. For the committee, Bruce Downing and Ann Durant brought information about a proposed "Light Year" fundraiser involving the historic Saylesville meetinghouse. The plan is to solicit sponsorship donations for solar lights to be placed on the meetinghouse grounds during December and January, with the goal of having a light for each year since the building was erected in 1703. The initial supply of lights has been donated, and monies raised would go to the Monthly Meeting. The committee would like to use the mailing address of Meeting member Ed Turco, rather than that of the treasurer, in order to emphasize the connection to the Saylesville community. If the project is successful this year, it could be repeated in future years. The committee asks for permission to proceed with the project this year. Friends approved.

Hospitality Committee. For the committee, Eugenia Marks reported that Friends have been helpful in

signing up for and carrying out the tasks required for our valued coffee hour fellowship. An increase in fruits and vegetables was noted with approval. Preparations are underway for the Christmas gathering potluck on December 14 and for a Young Friends retreat has just occurred. We thank the committee for their work.

Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee. On behalf of the committee, Dan Lederer brought a proposal to address potential requests for the use of the Providence meetinghouse for religious ceremonies other than our own by adding the following sentence to the guidelines for the meetinghouse scheduler:

“The use of the meetinghouse for weddings, funerals, memorial services, or other religious ceremonies by outside groups, regardless of their religious tradition, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, bearing in mind that our meetinghouse is to be used primarily for Quaker worship and related activities.” Friends approved.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:45 p.m., intending to meet next on the 12th of First month 2020 at Providence.

Dan Lederer, clerk

Rebecca Smith, recording clerk

Christmas Gathering Saturday, December 14

The Special Events Committee would like to announce that this year’s Christmas Gathering will be on Saturday, December 14, from 5:00 until 7:00 PM. The Gathering features singing, sharing, fellowship, and a potluck. If you would like to participate with a song, a reading, or a reminiscence, please let John Lord know. Also, instrumentalists are encouraged to join the Sounds of Silence orchestra. Auditions take place during the Gathering itself, so just do your best.

Session for Newcomers

Our monthly session for newcomers and others wishing to learn more about the Society of Friends will take place at 11:45 AM next Sunday, December 15, in the Providence meetinghouse library. See Rebecca Smith, Rebecca Leuchak, or Betsy Cazden for more information.

Fellowship with Muslim Friends

We will be sharing fellowship with our Muslim friends again on Friday, December 20. If you are interested please contact either Wendy Virgadamo or Bob Watt. We will be meeting at the Masjid Al Kareem mosque, 39 Haskins Street, Providence, at 1:30 PM on Friday. Feel free to bring baked goods to share if you like. These sessions are weather-dependent, so, if there is any question, check with Wendy or Bob.

Light Year Display

from Ann Durant

Saylesville would like to announce the “Light Year Display” project. We are excited about the potential for bringing an interactive project to the community. We think it will be a fun way to bring attention to the building and fulfill a greater mission of spreading light into the world.

We would like to have a solar light sponsored for each year since the Saylesville Meeting House was built in 1703. That's 316 years! Sponsorship money raised will go to the general fund to help support the continued maintenance of our meaningful historic building.

This will be our kickoff year and we believe we can build and improve each year. We have been approved to move forward this week at Meeting for Business and received a great deal of support and enthusiasm. We will use this momentum to see how many lights we can have on display from December 15th through January 19th. We currently have 244 solar lights that have been donated and would love to see how many of those we can light up this year.

If you are interested in participating please see more information below or join us next week at Saylesville. We will try to have sponsor sheets at the Providence meetinghouse as well. To sponsor a Light Year please make out checks to Providence Friends Meeting and send your check to Light Year Display, care of Edward Turco, 199 River Road, Lincoln, RI 02865. Indicate the year you want to sponsor on the memo line. The amount of your donation is up to you but we suggest at least \$10.00.

Committee Fair

January's first First Day (January 5) will be our annual Committee Fair. Come and bring festive foods for our first potluck lunch of the New Year and learn more about the work of our busy committees that are so essential to helping our Friends community thrive. Children's activities are a special feature of this event!

Take Advantage of a Medicare Benefit You May Not Be Using *from Zona Douthit*

If you have a BCBSRI Medicare Advantage plan, usually called a BlueCHIP plan, you have an over-the-counter benefit worth \$25-100 a quarter for drugstore items such as pain relievers, cold remedies, first aid items and vitamins. If you don't use it, you lose it. Nothing rolls over from the previous quarter. I have found that many people do not understand or fully use this benefit that costs you nothing extra. I believe other Medicare Advantage insurers offer similar benefits.

If you do not use this benefit, or all of it, consider ordering extra items to give to Camp Street Community Services or even hand out to the homeless at the intersections. Look for information and the catalog of available items with your 2020 Medicare booklet. The price listed in the catalog is the price CVS will subtract from your quarterly benefit. It's easy to do by phone, 1-888-2770 (M-F 9am-8pm) or on-line at BCBSRI.othchs.com. I suggest that you have your list of item code numbers ready if you call. Be patient. It takes a while for the orders to arrive.

I am ordering 10 each of hand sanitizers, tissues, lip balm and cough drops, and 5 first aid kits to use my benefit for this quarter. I plan to bag them up and hand out to the homeless--**ALL FOR ZERO COST TO ME!**

(N.B, I do not use all caps, bold type or exclamation points frivolously but have made an exception here because this is such an easy and compassionate thing to do.)

Clerk’s Corner: In Gratitude

from Rebecca Leuchak

Thank you! At this end of year, and in this season, I am so very aware of the many gifts that Friends give to each other at Providence Meeting. Not just in one season, but year-long and with generous continuity. And so in that spirit of giving, I offer to you a selection of small gems of meditation for the twelve days of Christmas, tokens of gratitude for all you do to create and sustain our wonderful community of Light!

Day 1:

O brother man!
Fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells,
The peace of God is there;
To worship rights
Is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn,
Each kindly deed a prayer.

~John Greenleaf Whittier

Day 2:

Therefore, dear Friends,
Wait in the Light,
That the word of the Lord
May dwell plentifully in you

~William Dewsbury

Day 3:

The best way to know God
is to love many things.

~Vincent Van Gogh

Day 4:

Be on your guard;
Stand firm in faith;
Be courageous;
Be strong.
Do everything in love.

~Apostle Paul

Day 5:

Our principle is, and our
practices have always
been, to seek peace and
ensue [*sic*] it; to follow
after righteousness and
the knowledge of God;
seeking the good and
welfare, and doing that
which tends to the peace
of all.

~George Fox

Day 6:

Love was the first
motion.

~John Woolman

Day 7:

I would maintain that
thanks is the highest form
of thought; that gratitude
is happiness doubled by
wonder.

~G.K. Chesterton

Day 8:

Speak up for those who
cannot speak for
themselves: ensure justice
for those being crushed.
Yes, speak up for the
poor and helpless, and
see that they get justice.

~Proverbs 31:8-9

Day 9:

We cannot attain the
presence of God
because we’re already
totally in the presence
of God. What is absent
is awareness.

~Richard Rohr

Day 10:

Peace is not the product
of terror or fear.
Peace is not the silence of
cemeteries.
Peace is not the silent
result of violent
repression.
Peace is the generous,
tranquil contribution of
all
to the good of all.
Peace is dynamism.
Peace is generosity.
It is right and it is duty.

~Oscar Romero

Day 11:

Our life is love, and
peace, and tenderness;
And bearing one with
another, and forgiving
One another, and not
laying accusations one
Against another; but
praying one for another,
And helping one another
up with a tender hand.

~Isaac Pennington

Day 12:

Whatever you are doing,
that which makes you feel
the most alive...that is
where God is.

~St. Ignatius of Loyola

To all who have been a part of our community over this past year, who have led a major initiative, who have pitched in when help was needed, who have responded to needs of others, who have worked in the world for justice and peace, who have held our community grounded in the Spirit, who have supported our Meeting in time and in treasure, I thank you!

Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

Presiding Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** clerk@providencefriends.org
Assistant Presiding Clerk: **Dan Lederer**
Recording Clerk: **Rebecca Smith**
Treasurer: **Peter Swaszek**
Ministry & Counsel: **Bruce Shaw**
Pastoral Care Committee: **Hans-Dieter Gomes**
Finance: **Steve Thomas**
Peace & Social Action: **Steve Schwartz**
Hospitality: **Eugenia Marks**
Religious Education: **Victoria Ekk**
Communications: **Dan Lederer**
Special Events Committee: **John Lord**
Library: **Rebecca Smith**
Archive: **Dan Lederer**
Property: **Bob Elliott and Nina Berry**
Burial Grounds: **Matt Hackman**
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providencefriends.org
Email list moderator: **Dan Lederer**
Website: **Sam Schifman** webclerk@providencefriends.org
Moses Brown School Liaison: **Ariana Steele**
Adult Religious Education: **Ben Lamm and Carol Smith**
To schedule the Meetinghouse: **Dan Lederer**
Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** info@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
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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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99 Morris Avenue

Providence, RI 02906